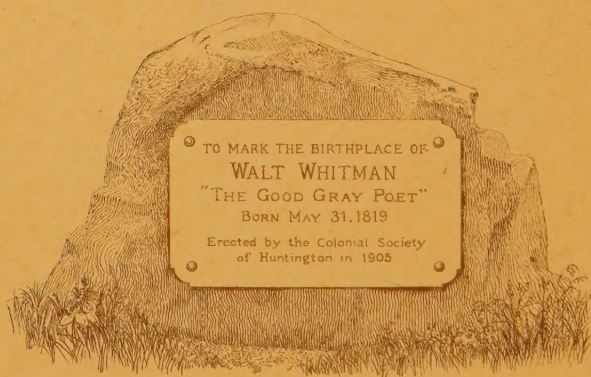




Stone and Tablet Marking the Whitman Birthplace at West Hills
Long Island

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G. P. Putnam's Sons

The Gathering of the Forces



THE GATHERING OF THE FORCES

BY

WALT WHITMAN

EDITORIALS, ESSAYS, LITERARY AND DRAMATIC REVIEWS
AND OTHER MATERIAL WRITTEN BY WALT WHITMAN
AS EDITOR OF THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE IN
1846 AND 1847

EDITED BY

CLEVELAND RODGERS AND JOHN BLACK

WITH A FOREWORD AND A SKETCH OF WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK
DURING TWO UNKNOWN YEARS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE

ILLUSTRATIONS IN PHOTOGRAVURE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1920

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1920
Vol. 1

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G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

12313



Printed in the United States of America

FOREWORD

I

Camerado! This is no book;
Who touches this, touches a man;
(Is it night? Are we here alone?)
It is I you hold, and who holds you;
I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls me forth.

HERE, then, is the flesh—and the bone—
and the blood. The quick, athletic body is
here—and the massive, arrogant shoulders—
the imperious head, the laughing lips and
eyes. Here, then, is the identity: touchings
of hands and significant hints, friendly meet-
ings and whispered confidences. Are you
looking for selected thoughts, for circum-
scribed hours and days? None of these is
here. Nor conventions. Nor introductions.
. . . We meet. We salute. We give and
take of that which is best in each. Then—
so long!

Here are the sensations and their consequent
impressions, the ideals and their inevitable
penalties. Discoveries are here: sudden,
strange meanings, unimagined nobilities,

FOREWORD

hidden moments of soul-struggle and suffering. . . .

Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but
I am now with you.)

“This is no book”—a hand is outstretched, here. A merry greeting sounds . . . Have you any doubts for America? This lover of America confounds your doubts. Have you great hopes for America? Walt Whitman justifies your hopes—and substantiates and supplements your hopes.

Here are the “Leaves of Grass.” Sun, wind and rain are at work on the soil—and the eager roots fatten responsively. The poet absorbs rich sensations of color and contact. Life is at its crest. People and places delight him—and new problems—and new ideas:

Welcome are all earth’s lands, each for its kind,

he says; and he embraces them all. “All this inures to me”: a far country’s suffering, a sprouting tree, a cantatrice’s soprano, a

FOREWORD

President's proclamation, a new book, a criminal's misery. . . . Days are lovely entities—each heavy with its priceless freight of messages and explanations. Walt lets none pass unchallenged. Today is the further development of yesterday: tomorrow is the evolution of today. Walt hails them all, and interrogates them all. "Is today nothing?" he demands, "Is the beginningless past nothing?" He greets alike the immigrant and the statesman, the seamstress and the débutante:

The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his perfect blood;

The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the beggar, see themselves in the ways of him—he strangely transmutes them,

They are not vile any more—they hardly know themselves, they are so grown.

II

WALT is impatient of America. Through this whole book—this rich, glorious pæan of Americanism—sounds his trumpet of protest. American music he invokes, and American

FOREWORD

literature, and American art, and—above all
—American identity:

I announce that the identity of These States is a single
identity only;

I announce the Union more and more compact, indis-
soluble;

I announce splendors and majesties to make all the
previous politics of the earth insignificant.

Are you looking for a sign, you Americans
who doubt and ponder? Are the hours of re-
construction sinister to you? And bitter to
you? And deep with evil portent, to you?
Here is your sign, here is your answer: Whit-
man may arraign his America and excoriate
his America—but he never fears for his
America.

“America always!” he proclaims,—Amer-
ica indomitable, invincible. But he is a
stern, jealous patriot: “What is this you
bring my America?” he accuses. Then—
what touching, examining, testing! Is it
true? Is it beautiful? Is it justified? And
how eager to grant his benediction when the
requirements are met!

FOREWORD

III

SURELY no land has ever rejoiced in a greater or more precious heritage than "Leaves of Grass"! Walt is the unique composite of world citizen and nationalist. He asserts his admiration, his respect for all lands—not the bigger more than the smaller. But to America herself he makes no polite address—we find her living and breathing in all his writings: she is in and of his every hope and dream.

His humanity knows no geographical boundaries; an outrage in Syria stirs his wrath as readily as one perpetrated in his own beloved Brooklyn.

As if Justice could be anything but the same ample law, expounded by natural judges and saviors,

he muses,—then he finds that "the great laws take and effuse without argument." Life is ever a wonder and a marvel to him—in these prose "Leaves" no less than in their immortal successors. Days are wonderful to him—and nights—and the election of Presidents—

FOREWORD

and the triumphs of great actors and actresses
—and the independent gesture of the immi-
grant as he stalks up the dock. Then,
breathlessly, he adds,

And that the moon spins round the earth, and on with
the earth, is equally wonderful,
And that they balance themselves with the sun and
stars, is equally wonderful.

IV

*So here they are, Walt! those dear rich days!
The laughter is here, and the sunset: the hours of
joy and the hours of sorrow. The brave days of
campaigning are here . . . and the merry
controversies . . . and the patient tasks . . .
and all the Brooklyn boys you loved! Your
friends are more numerous, now (though no more
faithful!)—and you are famous . . .*

*Your message is spreading, now—America is
growing toward you. The hands that bear your
banner are stronger, now—greater voices are
uplifted in your cause . . .*

For the war, the war is over!

JOHN BLACK.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

1846-1847

WALT WHITMAN'S life and work, conceived as an arch with "Leaves of Grass" as the keystone, have heretofore lacked that harmony and unity he always sought and proclaimed. The keystone is supported on one side by those superb voussoirs hewed so laboriously during the long years of his physical infirmity, reinforced by Horace Traubel's remarkable records published in "With Walt Whitman in Camden." The other side of the arch is weak, indeed, made up for the most part of scraps, but poorly joined, and displaying many significant gaps. Whitman's biographers, even those most devoted and painstaking, seem merely to have assembled the early data, jotted them down, and then hurried on to "Leaves of Grass" and the Good Gray Poet—the fascinating and dramatic story of America's "first authentic voice," the echoes of consternation and ap-

WALT WHITMAN

plause it aroused, and then on to the final exultant shout of victory—paying but slight attention to these suggestive and challenging omissions.

Whitman himself was largely responsible for this curious ignoring or slighting of such a vital part of his life story. Like a new mother, he quickly forgot his labor when he held his first book in his hands. His biographers accepted his own valuation of his beginnings as a writer and have to a large extent confined themselves to the materials provided by Whitman himself. The purpose of this book is to go beyond this stock data and present a mass of material from Whitman's own pen, the product of two full years of his literary life, the very existence of which has been almost completely ignored.

Whitman was unique as a writer and poet but he did not become both by publishing "Leaves of Grass" at the age of thirty-six. As a matter of fact he had a most exhaustive apprenticeship as a writer before acquiring the unusual mastery of the tools of his craft displayed in his first published poems. John

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

Burroughs and others have covered, in a general way, the ten or twelve years of preparation, during which Whitman worked as a printer and writer on newspapers, wrote fiction and picked up a knowledge of men and life, before starting "Leaves of Grass." So far, however, little has been written clearly setting forth just what Whitman did during those years and relating his various activities to the work upon which his fame rests.

The two years here recorded were, from the point of view of Whitman's literary development, and perhaps character development as well, the most important in his life up to the time he published his poems. This is readily established by a brief analysis of his activities from the time he came to New York in 1840 until 1855, when "Leaves of Grass" made its appearance. Whitman moved to Brooklyn with his parents when he was about five years old. For six or seven years he went to public schools. At fifteen he started to work, first in a lawyer's office, then in a doctor's office; finally he learned typesetting in the office of the Long Island Star in Brook-

WALT WHITMAN

lyn. At nineteen he began teaching school in Suffolk and Queens counties, Long Island. Following this he started the Long Islander at Huntington, L. I. This venture did not last long and in 1840 he came back to New York.

During the five years following, before Whitman became editor of The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, he worked as a printer a part of the time, and was connected with several papers, including the Democratic Review, Aurora and the Tatler. He wrote several short stories and at least one long one, "Franklin Evans, A Tale of the Times," a temperance tract for which he received \$50 at first and later a little more. He became interested in politics and made political speeches, along with his writing. Finally, he became editor of The Eagle early in March, 1846. This connection lasted for two years, until January, 1848. From this position he went to New Orleans, where he remained only a few months. Back in Brooklyn he started the Freeman, a newspaper that lasted but a brief time. Whitman then turned to house building and selling, working with his father in this busi-

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

ness. Except for a short period during which he worked on the Brooklyn Times, his writing, other than his poems, was sporadic and restricted in volume. He finally published "Leaves of Grass" in 1855.

Whitman's editorship of *The Eagle* was therefore the most important position he held during the whole period prior to the appearance of his poems. He held the position much longer than any other. It was the last work to which he devoted any considerable time before giving up everything for his big idea. As his work itself shows, it has more of continuity than anything he wrote with the exception of "Leaves of Grass," and more of variety. In short, the material here presented is the product of the mature Whitman immediately before he evolved a different form of expression. The thought, feeling, interests, the magnificent sweep of imagination, the humanity, democracy and everything else that go to make up the Whitman known to the world are to be found here in prose that has distinction of its own.

There is every indication that Whitman

WALT WHITMAN

fully appreciated the opportunity that came to him after five years of struggling to get on in the newspaper world. He was not yet twenty-seven years old when he succeeded William B. Marsh, who died February 26, 1846, and became the second editor of *The Eagle*, then in its fifth year. Mr. Marsh was an able man. He had been a friend of Horace Greeley and worked with him as a printer in New York. Mr. Marsh had given *The Eagle* a standing in Brooklyn, then a city of forty thousand, and among newspapers in New York and throughout the country. The young editor had every reason to be proud. He was doubtless fully conscious of having found a worthy place for himself and eager to make the most of it. Like most newspapers of the day, *The Eagle* was a political organ, the local mouth-piece of the Democratic-Republican Party, but this in no way limited Whitman at first, for he was as ardently partisan as the paper.

In "Specimen Days" Whitman thus describes the entire period of his newspaper work:

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

I next (after starting the "Long Islander" at Huntington) went to the Aurora Daily in New York City—as a sort of free lance. Also wrote regularly for "The Tatler," an evening paper. With these and a little outside work I was occupied off and on, until I went to edit The Brooklyn Eagle, where for two years I had one of the pleasantest sits* of my life—a good owner, good pay, and easy work and hours. The troubles in the Democratic Party broke forth about those times (1848-'49) and I split off with the radicals, which led to rows with the boss and "the party," and I lost my place.

The owner and "boss" was Isaac Van Anden, founder of the paper, a man of considerable force and character. There is every indication that for almost the whole period of Whitman's editorship he enjoyed absolute freedom as to what he wrote and how he wrote it. There is nowhere in his work the slightest suggestion of restraint, and when the susceptibilities of a community such as Brooklyn in those days are considered, many of the things that appeared in the columns for which Whitman was responsible seem daringly provocative, to say the least.

* "Sit," a term used by printers, an abbreviation of "situation."

WALT WHITMAN

It should not be inferred, however, that Whitman filled his columns with matter calculated to disturb the pillars of society in Brooklyn or elsewhere. This book should quite definitely dispose of the fallacy which has persisted since the first appearance of "Leaves of Grass," that Walt Whitman sounded his "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world" because he was a barbarian and could do nothing but yawp. Whitman learned to conform to prevailing standards in every essential particular long before he began "yawping." The point is significant. It proves that his every subsequent departure from convention was deliberate, measured and, in a sense, rehearsed. This does not argue insincerity or prove affectation. It merely disproves that Whitman was an ignorant literary iconoclast who expressed himself unconventionally because he was incapable of following accepted standards. Barring certain peculiarities of style, spelling, punctuation and the use of type in ways that would not suggest themselves to anyone unfamiliar with typesetting, Whitman's work might have come from the

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

most conventional of his contemporaries. The style gives it distinction, to be sure, but it is not bizarre, and it is only in its relation to the rest of Whitman's work that it gains its full import.

In other ways, too, Whitman conformed in those days. He dressed much as other men about him; he was a respectable member of a conventional community; he attended all kinds of functions, private and public; was for a year secretary of the General Committee of the Democratic-Republican Party, of which Isaac Van Anden, his "boss," was a member; he was a member for two years of the Fourth of July Celebration Committee; he took part in political and patriotic parades, wrote and read an ode at a Fourth of July celebration at Fort Greene; went to church occasionally; attended Sunday School picnics, patronized the theatres, opera, concerts and art exhibitions; in short, he took his full part in the life of the town with dignity and without exciting suspicion that he was either more or less than he pretended to be.

For years there was a highly fanciful leg-

WALT WHITMAN

end current in The Eagle office to the effect that Walt Whitman was a huge joke as an editor. He was represented as a lazy, indifferent loafer who spent most of his time fishing, swimming and roaming about the country, writing for the paper when he felt like it, but not otherwise. In attempting to trace this legend to its origin the discovery was soon made that the few living persons connected with The Eagle who recalled Walt Whitman in the flesh never knew him as editor of the paper, but as the poet of later days. Their impressions came from glimpses of Whitman during some of his many visits to Brooklyn long after he had attained a degree of fame as a poet, and had become the picturesque figure made familiar by his many photographs. The character ascribed to him was doubtless built around a hazy idea of his verses.

This was not Whitman, the young and virile editor of 1846 and 1847. A true picture of Whitman at that time has nevertheless been preserved in the memory of a man who worked with him, played with him and knew every

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

detail of his daily routine as an editor. William Henry Sutton, still living (1920) at the age of ninety, was printer's devil in *The Eagle* office when Whitman was editor. Although he was but fifteen years old at the time, Mr. Sutton clearly recalls Whitman as editor and many facts which help to fill in the background of the picture. Mr. Sutton had reason to think well of Whitman. The editor became attached to the office boy and treated him kindly, called him Henry or "Hen" as it suited him, and while he sent the boy on errands and found other jobs for him he did much to make it worth Henry's while.

According to Mr. Sutton, Whitman was a good man, a "nice, kind man." He wore a short beard, dressed conventionally and carried himself with dignity. He did not live with his father, whose house at 71 Prince Street was during 1848 advertised for sale in *The Eagle*, but boarded with a family on Adams street, near Myrtle avenue. Whitman sometimes wrote articles at home, and once or twice young Sutton was sent to the boarding house for "copy" Whitman had written and left at

WALT WHITMAN

home by mistake. Most of the editorial work was done at the office, and Mr. Sutton is quite sure that Whitman always came down to work early and went at it energetically. He was always either reading or writing while in his room in the office. He had comparatively few visitors, and they were "mostly politicians." Mr. Sutton does not recall ever seeing Mr. Whitman and Isaac Van Anden together, the latter spending most of his time in the business office of the paper, while Whitman was upstairs in his editorial sanctum.

Whitman wrote his editorials during the morning and sent them to the composing room, after which he would take a short walk. Mr. Sutton, who was learning to set type at the time, often handled the Whitman manuscript and relates that the printers had explicit instructions to "follow copy" literally, especially as to spelling and punctuation, Whitman always telling them that every liberty they took would be penalized when he read the proof. He always insisted that every comma and other mark be put in as indicated. With this in mind great care has been ex-

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

exercised in copying these editorials to preserve all the typographical peculiarities. Exceptions are made where obvious typographical errors appear, but in the main the Whitman typography has been followed. The same rule has been adopted as to grammar and spelling. All the matter not in brackets is presented as it was written and edited by Whitman.

After his walk Whitman would return to the office to read proof on the material for the day's paper. That ended his work for the day and it was his custom to take young Sutton with him to Gray's Swimming Bath at the foot of Fulton Street, where he would stay in the water exactly twenty minutes. Sutton would then work the pump to give Whitman a shower, after which Whitman would leave Sutton at the bath and go off, usually across the ferry to New York, where Sutton frequently saw him riding alongside the drivers of the busses on Broadway.

As Whitman has said, he had good pay, easy work and hours. He was undoubtedly happy; in the best of health, with a robust physique and few clouds on his horizon. He

WALT WHITMAN

was interested in everything around him and enjoyed the greatest freedom in expressing his mind on every subject. He was a partisan in politics, but to him Democracy and the principles of the Democratic-Republican Party were synonymous; when they ceased to be so he ceased to be a partisan and became all Democrat. For this reason his general editorials on Democracy are grouped together here, despite the partisanship displayed in some. The idealization of the principles of his party at least was justified. He did not spare the party or individual members of it when in his judgment they departed from the primary articles of his political faith.

It was perhaps inevitable that Whitman should sooner or later seek a wider field, but he did not do so deliberately and the story of his leaving *The Eagle* is an entirely new and significant chapter in his life. It marks a turning point in his career, involving a moral crisis in which Whitman proved himself complete master of his own fate. It is not altogether futile, however, to speculate on the possible course the poet might have pursued

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

had he been allowed by circumstances indefinitely to pursue the even tenor of his way under conditions which he found so much to his liking during his two years as an editor. Whitman was known to his contemporaries as a poet. There are many unsigned poems in *The Eagle* of those days which were doubtless from his pen. They are, for the most part, trivial, sentimental, painfully conventional. Nevertheless they indicate that Whitman tried and abandoned the idea of expressing himself in conventional verse. Is it not possible that under slightly different circumstances he might have confined himself to prose, delivering his message in the form which he first employed?

This is suggested by a study of his work and the facts connected with the radical change that took place in Whitman's life early in 1848, when he "lost his place." Elsewhere in this volume will be found a brief analysis of the political and moral issue out of which the historic split in the Democratic-Republican Party developed. Our purpose here is to give the personal aspects of the matter, along with

WALT WHITMAN

the facts as brought to light by the files of the newspapers of the time.

Immediately after taking up his work on *The Eagle* Whitman made his position clear on the question of slavery. He abhorred slavery and was ready to go to war with Brazil to stop the slave trade. Along with his party and most Americans of the day he was not ready to disturb the institution of slavery in the Southern States. He believed that slavery would eventually be abolished by the growth of the Democratic spirit working through an enlightened public opinion, but he accepted the legality of the status of slavery in American territory as fixed by the Missouri Compromise, and roundly denounced the extreme Abolitionists on the ground that they were disregarding the established laws of the land and injuring the cause they professed to serve by stirring up strife which threatened disunion. In this connection it is worth pointing out that there is a striking parallel between the attitude of Whitman and that of Abraham Lincoln throughout the whole slavery controversy in those days which may be followed clear through

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

the Civil War crisis, although Lincoln was then a Whig and Whitman was the staunchest of Democratic-Republicans.

Slavery was not a political issue when Whitman became editor of *The Eagle*, but it soon became the great question of the day, due to the origin and outcome of the Mexican War. Whitman supported President Polk and the war against Mexico, although he never lost an opportunity to denounce war and was ready at one stage in the conflict to have it ended on any terms. When this was made impossible by the Mexicans he urged a much more vigorous prosecution of the campaign. From the early days of the war Whitman also recognized that the annexation of a large amount of Mexican territory was inevitable. He advocated annexation and gloried in every step tending to extend the boundaries of the Republic on the ground that the spread of Democracy and freedom justified any measure of expansion. He was ready to have the United States put Canada and Russian America in "her pocket" along with a large part of Mexico. But the idea of extending slavery

WALT WHITMAN

in the new territory to be taken from Mexico was incompatible with his idea of the spread of freedom.

Whitman claimed to have been the first editor in New York to come out boldly and emphatically in opposition to the extension of slavery in the new territory. He took this stand in an editorial on December 21, 1846. He soon had plenty of support. In Congress David Wilmot had introduced the famous Wilmot Proviso, the purpose of which was to exclude slavery from any new territory. This proviso was passed by the House of Representatives and the New York Legislature voted anti-slavery resolutions enunciating the same principles. It soon became apparent, however, that the Democratic-Republican Party was afraid of the issue that was thus being created. Most of the party's strength was in the South and the Southern Democrats were solidly opposed to this prohibition of slavery. The New York Democrats in convention in Syracuse, following the action of the Legislature, ignored the question because of its danger to party unity. In the

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

election that followed, in November, 1847, the Democrats were overwhelmingly defeated.

Up to that time Whitman stood with the party on all questions except that of the extension of slavery. He then became aggressive in his attitude. He attributed the Democratic defeat to the cowardice of the convention in ignoring the new slavery issue. In Congress, the Wilmot Proviso had been defeated by the Senate adjourning without acting on it. Later, largely through the efforts of General Lewis Cass, the House receded from its position and rejected the Proviso. The Democratic-Republican Party was now split wide open, and Whitman wrote one editorial after another supporting the Wilmot Proviso faction.

The New York Anti-Wilmot Proviso Democrats in convention in Albany first attempted to bring the Proviso supporters back into the organization, but later read them out of the party. The "radicals" then called a convention of their own in Utica and prepared to elect delegates to the National Convention to be held in Baltimore. Through all of this

WALT WHITMAN

conflict Isaac Van Anden stood with the "regular" organization. He was treasurer of the local General Committee, which first tried to hold aloof, but later definitely sided with the Anti-Wilmot Proviso faction. It was this controversy that brought about the "rows with the boss" to which Whitman refers. Whitman stood his ground, not only refusing to write what he did not believe but declining to refrain from expressing his strongly held convictions.

The climax in the relations between Whitman and Van Anden seems to have been precipitated by the letter written by General Lewis Cass to A. O. P. Nicholson of Nashville, Tenn., on December 24, 1847, which became public early in January. This letter was an important factor in causing a realignment in the House of Representatives on the Wilmot Proviso. It was quoted at length by Abraham Lincoln, who repeatedly voted for the Wilmot Proviso, in a speech in the House on July 27, 1848 (see "Abraham Lincoln," Nicolay and Hay). Whitman took up the argument presented by General Cass in this letter in an

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

editorial published on January 3, 1848, and assailed it vigorously. It seems significant that *The Eagle* should have published nearly a column of extracts from the same letter two days later. The most plausible explanation is that Van Anden, who agreed with General Cass's view of the Wilmot Proviso, took exception to Whitman's editorial of January 3, and wanted General Cass's arguments presented in a better light. The least Whitman could do was to publish the text of the Cass argument. That was also the most he would do, for he did not modify his original attitude.

It is impossible to determine from the files the exact date of Whitman's leaving the paper. On January 5, when the Cass letter was published, the second part of "The Boy Lover," signed by Walter Whitman, appeared, so Whitman did not leave immediately. Perhaps the best clew as to the date is contained in the following from the *Brooklyn Advertiser*, *The Eagle's* journalistic contemporary, which seems to have gotten inside information of the trouble between Van Anden and Whitman:

“English editors, ‘Britishers’ Advertiser men—*Eagle of last week*.

“‘Mexican editors’—*Eagle of yesterday*.

“‘Yankee editors’—*Eagle of next Saturday*.”

This was published in *The Eagle* of Saturday, January 22, 1848, with this comment: “We feel compelled in justice to our witty neighbor to complete the list as follows: ‘Silly editors,’ *Eagle of today*.” All that is intelligible or important in this is that the Advertiser was noting a change of *Eagle* editors the previous week. This was approximately the date of Whitman’s departure. The paper was weak in political comment during the period from January 3 to January 24, when a leader not by Whitman made its appearance. But during this time there were several minor articles, such as book reviews, a theatrical notice and several paragraphs that were undoubtedly written by Whitman, though not necessarily on the days of publication. On January 21, 1848, the *New York Tribune* published the following, under the caption: “A Barnburner Paper”:

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

We are informed from the best authority that the Barnburners of Brooklyn are about starting a new daily paper, as, it is said, *The Eagle* has returned to old Hunkerism again. Mr. Walter Whitman, late of *The Eagle*, is to have charge of the new enterprise. The split in the Loco-foco Party rages with all its bitterness in Kings County—a place where a clique of office-loving Locos has for years bidden defiance to principle and public interest, too, for the sake of the drippings.

That Whitman contemplated starting another newspaper is highly probable. The offer to join the staff of the *New Orleans Crescent*, which he accepted, came to him quite by accident, between the acts of a play he was witnessing in New York, as he relates in "Specimen Days." As a matter of fact he started such a paper, *The Freeman*, as soon as he returned from the South some months later, and made it a "Free Soil" Democratic sheet.

The faithful *Advertiser* did not at once let up on the change that had taken place in *The Eagle* office. Whitman was undoubtedly the Cock Robin to which the following, from the *Advertiser* of January 23, alluded:

WALT WHITMAN

I, said the sparrow,
With my bow and arrow
I killed cock robin.

Still later, on February 17, we find the following "Impromptu Address to the Editor of the Advertiser" in The Eagle:

It is true, as you say,
We sent Whitman away,
But that is a private affair;
But since you have spoken
Know by this token,
You have no *wit, man*, to spare.

On January 21, The Eagle had this to say in reply to some comment on Whitman's leaving which appeared in the New York Globe:

The New York Globe had better attend to its own affairs and let ours alone. We should like to know, however, since it has been so kind as to volunteer its advice and counsel, what authority it has for saying that there is any change in the political conduct of this paper? The publisher, in the course of his business arrangements, has found it necessary to dispense with one of its editors, and although he did not see fit to consult the Globe in regard to the matter, yet he claims that it has no right to misrepresent his motives, or in any way meddle with his affairs. If The Eagle puts forth false doctrines or takes erroneous

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

positions the *Globe* is at full liberty to expose its errors and correct its mistakes; but in our business affairs we claim the right to act without its impertinent interference.

The apparent indignation over the *Globe*'s suggestion that there had been any change in the "political conduct of the paper" was perhaps justified at the time the above was published. It was not long, however, before a very marked change in *The Eagle*'s policy took place. On January 27, the Anti-Wilmot Proviso Convention in Albany was "played up" on the editorial page, and the attitude of General Cass received more and more attention. This continued until the Baltimore Convention, when the Anti-Proviso Democrats nominated Cass for President. The *Eagle* welcomed the nomination and placed the names of Cass and Butler at the head of its editorial page. The "Barnburners" and Free Soil Democrats split off from the party and later nominated Van Buren.

Whitman, meanwhile, had gone to New Orleans, where he worked on the *Crescent*. That his trouble with Van Anden over matters

WALT WHITMAN

of policy had no more serious aspects and left them well disposed toward each other is proved by the following, from *The Eagle* of March 14, 1848:

THE CRESCENT.

A new daily paper with this title has been commenced at New Orleans, and the first number has reached us. It is nearly of the size of *The Eagle*, is beautifully printed and got up with admirable taste. The number before us has strong letters from New York, from Washington and from the Army in Mexico; and it exhibits enterprise, tact and ability. It is down on the treaty *pell mell*, and appears to be a fearless, independent sheet and one well calculated to win its way to favor. Mr. Whitman, recently principal editor of *The Eagle*, went out to New Orleans to take part in the conduct of this paper, and we discern his handy work in several of its editorials. We trust that both will flourish "like a green bay tree."

This completes the record of Whitman's coming and going so far as the files of the period show.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle and Kings County Democrat, to give the paper its full title, was in 1846-47 a six-column, four-page affair gotten up much as other newspapers of the day. The first page carried the publisher's

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

announcements, etc., which now appear on editorial pages. Before Whitman took charge, the entire first page of the paper was given up to advertisements. He promptly arranged for two or more columns on this page to be devoted to matter of literary interest and published a note each day on the editorial page calling attention to features printed on the first page. He seems to have exerted himself to find worthy material for this space. During the two years of his editorship he published, or republished, poems, short stories and serials by Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Hawthorne, and numerous other contemporary American authors; also translations from Goethe and many other foreign writers. Included in this list were Poe's "Tale of the Ragged Mountains," and Hawthorne's "The Shaker Bridal" and "Old Esther Dudley." It was in this department that he published or republished practically all of his short stories, including the two presented here, which are not reprinted in his complete prose works. There were numerous unsigned poems, many of them doubtless by Whitman.

WALT WHITMAN

The second page was the editorial and news page of the paper, although that, too, usually carried a column or more of advertising of various kinds. There remained about four columns to be filled by the editor. Most of the local news was paragraphed under the general heading, "City Intelligence," and contained items of all descriptions, a large number of which were contributed. The remaining four columns were given over to editorials, political and general news, dramatic criticism, book reviews and everything else that came along. The rest of the paper was filled with advertising. Whitman's task was by no means a sinecure. He must have written two columns or more a day, on an average, exclusive of his special articles, essays and fiction. In addition he had to select the matter for the first page, edit contributions, and read proof on the whole. Furthermore, he had to supervise a weekly edition of the paper. It was not until 1851 that The Eagle added to its staff Henry McCloskey, described as "the first reporter ever to serve exclusively on any Brooklyn newspaper," so that the references to Whit-

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

man as "one of The Eagle's editors" were merely pleasant bits of understatement.

In a peculiar sense Whitman was The Eagle and The Eagle was Whitman. He made but slight use of the editorial "we" to give the appearance of anonymity to his writing, and quite frequently used the personal pronoun, unconsciously at times, as in his editorial on the monument to Lawrence: "I have a foolish weakness, when anything thrills me deeply, which in spite of all I can do, moistens my eyes." Such a human and Whitmanesque confession could never have come from an intriguing editorial "we." It is clear that Whitman often felt hampered by anonymity and the Whitman-Eagle duality produced some unique expressions, as when he speaks plaintively of it "not being in the range of human possibilities or condescensions for the *E.* to explain at the doors of places that it *is* the *E.*"

In the preface to the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" (1855) Whitman said:

When I commenced, years ago, elaborating the plan of my poems, and continued turning over that plan, and shifting it in my mind through many years,

WALT WHITMAN

(from the age of twenty-eight to thirty-five), experimenting much, and writing and abandoning much, one deep purpose underlay the others, and has underlain it and its execution ever since—and that has been the religious purpose.

This is direct confirmation of the fact that Whitman began turning over in his mind the plan of his poems while still on *The Eagle*, or very shortly thereafter, for he became twenty-nine years old on May 31, 1848. His work at that time fully sustains his declaration of the deeply religious nature of his thought at the moment when he conceived the idea of putting his ideas and emotions into poetry. The dominant feature of all of Whitman's writings in those days was its religious fervor. It pervaded everything, from politics to fiction. He was a preacher, a moral teacher, a monitor-crusader. But how far he had already traveled away from creeds and forms is indicated in his two articles on "Splendid Churches," containing as spirited an attack upon the form of religion as distinguished from the teachings of Jesus Christ as can be found anywhere. The same idea is carried through all he wrote. He

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

invoked the teachings of Christ in his attacks upon slavery, capital punishment and every other seeming wrong that stirred him.

Through it all we see Whitman's own peculiar religion evolving, the religion of Democracy. Even then he prized Democracy chiefly for its spiritual values. Whitman saw clearly, at this early date, that Government, in a Democracy, while it could not be linked with a single creed, could not permanently be dissociated from the devout spirit of the people who created it and whom it was to serve. He saw that the more we exalt the State by making it truly the expression of the popular will the more necessary it becomes that the thing called government shall correspond to the best in men. Whitman then proclaimed that Democracy is primarily of the spirit. He was ready, then, to substitute faith in man for faith in the unknown; at least he made faith in the common man's potentialities paramount. He asserted in effect that this great faith in man was not to be impaired by ordinary discouragements and should not be confused by the failure of all manner of political

expedients during the process of Democracy's evolution.

Politics he regarded merely as the ways and means of getting things done. Government was the machine. Democracy was the spirit of the thing and should permeate the whole transaction. He had already grasped the fundamental truth that only on the spiritual side is inclusive Democracy possible. Like Lincoln, who was then struggling with the same great moral questions, Whitman saw that Democracy meant something more than a political system, and that it was because Democracy was primarily of the spirit that it would endure.

Whitman was not yet disillusioned as to political parties. He believed so thoroughly in Andrew Jackson that the system which dated from Jackson's régime did not at once reveal its defects to him. Political conventions and party machines were new. The Democratic-Republican Party machine was not created until 1833-37, and it was not until 1840 that the Whigs built up a party machine worthy of the name. As we have

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

seen, Whitman was himself a part of the Democratic machine. Since 1840 he had been closely connected with the New York Democratic organization. He frequented Tammany Hall, made speeches, and wrote political articles. In Brooklyn he was a member of the General Committee. As such he was as much a party to the system then getting on its feet as any other member of the organization. His amazing description of the make-up of an early political convention, given in "Origins of Attempted Secession," most certainly did not apply to the period 1846-1847. It is much more definitely linked with the nomination of Buchanan in 1856, long after Whitman had broken with his party and lost his position.

As early as 1841 we find Whitman exalting Democratic principles and decrying the use of these principles to further the interests of certain men ("Whitman Gives His Political Record"). He was primarily interested in Democracy as a religion. He believed in America because of its Democracy, and he never tired of contrasting the New World and

WALT WHITMAN

the Old. He was sure that in Europe, where the revolutions of 1848 were then brewing, the people would soon strike for freedom and liberty, and he always emphasized the importance of America as the beacon of the world. He has nowhere more directly applied his philosophy of Democracy than in his editorials of those days. His denunciation of the "Nativists," his expansive views of America's possibilities, and his ideas of the proper functions of government all mark a profound and mature mind.

Much has been made of Whitman as a prophet. He never made bolder prophesies than at the very outset of his career. Always a pathfinder for others, he was never more audacious and intellectually venturesome than in those early excursive days when he was instinctively searching out his own path. He saw where the European systems were leading. Looking beyond the crudities of America in those days, he was willing "to let the Old World wag on under its cumbrous load of form and conservatism," and to point to fifty years hence and say, "Let those laugh who win!"

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

Some of Whitman's suggestions are almost weird. He predicted in 1846 that such a man as Karl Marx was then writing a book that would create political and social convulsions. He anticipated Henry George by at least twenty years in certain suggestions regarding a single tax on realty. He envisaged the United States as it now exists before the Mexican War was well started and included Canada and Russian America (Alaska) in his dream of empire. He quickly saw the danger in slavery agitation and sensed the suicidal attitude of his party toward the issue. Horace Greeley's "Go West, Young Man," might have been inspired by any one of a dozen Whitman editorials. And who can deny that in certain of his ideas on education he was anticipating Madame Montessori, as he was most certainly taking a long lead over Edgar Lee Masters and "The Spoon River Anthology" in his essay on "An Afternoon in Greenwood"?

Of much more lasting value is the link between today and the more distant past provided by Whitman's early work. Whitman

WALT WHITMAN

came to manhood at a time when only a few of the founders of the Republic remained. He realized that with their passing direct contact with the Revolutionary days would be lost, and sought to grasp the torch from the hands of the survivors to be upheld and passed on by him. The date of Whitman's maturity is important. It accounts for much of his patriotic ardor and Americanism. He received his fire and enthusiasm from original sources at a time when these sources were being neglected or forgotten, and he revived and expanded the Democratic principles upon which the Republic was founded. In this connection his pen pictures of some of the leading figures in the first half of the Nineteenth Century have peculiar value.

Whitman once said: "I was in early life very bigotted in my anti-slavery, anti-capital punishment" attitude, but "have always had a latent toleration for the people who choose the reactionary course." His bigotry, as revealed in his moving human appeals and persistent attacks upon "the law of blood," at least had the merit of a conscience aroused and enlight-

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

ened before that of its day, while his boundless sympathy for the unfortunate, criminal or otherwise, and his heartfelt efforts to help, make modern scientific social welfare work seem cold indeed. Nothing of the kind seemed to escape him, from the flogging of children in the public schools to sewing girls' wages. He was concerned in the welfare of clerks and urged the early closing of stores; made practical suggestions for getting immigrants out of the crowded cities to western farms; was stirred to the depths by the famine in Ireland and denounced British oppression in unmeasured terms.

What can be said of Whitman the controversialist, the daily wrangler over trifles, as shown in his endless feud with the Brooklyn Advertiser, the Star and other contemporaries? This surely is a new side of Whitman, for one of the notable features of his literary career was his apparent indifference to attacks and his avoidance of controversy where his work was concerned. Yet here is the record of two years of controversy during which he was as often the attacker as the defender.

WALT WHITMAN

Most of it is shot through with good humor and a casual assumption of superiority that is merely entertaining, but he delivered some lusty blows and doubtless had to take a good deal of punishment. Politics was back of most of it, and petty politics at that, for Whitman was chief literary accelerator for his party in three local campaigns, all of which he lost without displaying the slightest chagrin. During this time, however, Whitman's interest in civic affairs was by no means limited to party politics. He was largely instrumental in securing Fort Greene' Park for Brooklyn. This, with its Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument, advocated by him, is a substantial achievement that will endure.

In no single political matter did Whitman show greater interest throughout his life than in the tariff question. He was a free trader, "by instinct" as he once said, and he early reacted to the urge. His cogent arguments on this subject should interest those who are today striving to eliminate economic barriers to lessen the possibilities of war. Mention has already been made of his ideas on

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

taxation. His views on currency reform and his well-reasoned support of the "Sub-Treasury Law," giving the country its first National Treasury, have been fully vindicated.

It seems curious that Whitman did not make an effort to recover some of his miscellaneous articles, buried in the files of *The Eagle*. He saved his trite stories, and many of his literary scraps, preserved with such scrupulous care and included in "Collect" and "Specimen Days," have far less interest or value. A possible explanation is that while Whitman left *The Eagle* in fairly good standing with Isaac Van Anden, his subsequent experience in Brooklyn, when he started an opposition newspaper, made him reluctant to ask permission to recover matter for which he had been paid. Van Anden lived until 1875, so this difficulty was not removed until Whitman's very last years.

Many of his essays are gems, revealing rare powers of observation and penetration, and record the impressions of a mind both alert and reflective. "Splendid Churches," "Motley's Your Only Wear," "Indian Life

WALT WHITMAN

and Customs. A True Subject For American Antiquarian Research," "An Afternoon in Greenwood," "A Funeral By Moonlight," "Philosophy of Ferries,"—to mention but a few of these extended articles—are far above the average newspaper output of those days.

It is worth something, too, to find that Whitman was not devoid of humor. Those who have charged him with this grave deficiency will revise their estimates after reading some of his fanciful pieces and the editorial paragraphs. It cannot be said that Whitman rose to great heights in this department of endeavor, but he had a lighter touch and a more elastic vein of humor than is commonly supposed. His occasional excursions into satire, as in "Mournful Matters," and his facility as otherwise indicated, emphasize the futility of too hastily defining Whitman's limitations.

So far as I know there is no parallel in literary history to this turning up, seventy-five years after it was written, of a mass of material more than equaling in volume the total known output of such a writer as Whit-

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

man. Perhaps the nearest approach to it is the story of Sebastian Bach, whose great compositions were unknown until a hundred years after his death, although Bach enjoyed considerable fame during his lifetime. It would be too much to claim that Whitman's editorial work, standing alone, would give him great distinction, but in relation to his subsequent work and in the bearing it has on his intellectual development, it is unique and significant. Few men of Whitman's stature have left records of their mental processes comparable to those contained in these old files. Owing to the fact that it was a part of his duty to read and review all books sent out by publishers, we have knowledge of what he read and what he thought of some of the greatest writers of the last century at the time when their work first appeared. Here we have Whitman's introduction to Carlyle, whose influence in his life was so marked, and his first cautious appraisal of him; we find him paying his respects to all the great names in literature; pronouncing judgments as though he knew that what he was writing really mat-

WALT WHITMAN

tered. The extent to which Whitman adhered to these early judgments, as shown by his literary estimates in his last days in Camden, is remarkable and can only be accounted for by the fact that in the main he set up his standards and attained his unique point of view years before writing his own poems.

"Democratic Vistas," that much-neglected chart and compass for American literature, is merely the finished product of which Whitman's early writings on literature and the fine arts were the raw materials. Some friend once quoted to Whitman Victor Hugo's remark when he pointed to the tramps and poor peasants and said: "These are not the people—these are but the mournful beginnings of the people." Whitman remarked that he had been trying all his life to say the same thing about the poor, about America and about Democracy. He knew that in literature we had made but a "mournful beginning," and he knew that before his conception of America and Democracy could be realized a truly indigenous literature was essential. He did all he could to stimulate such a literature before

WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK

he set out to create a good foundation for it by writing "Leaves of Grass." He called for declarations of independence in literature, in drama, in music and in art. He was not unmindful of the past or of our debt to European literature and culture, but he saw clearly that we could never develop as a nation and as a new race without a literature and a culture of our own, springing, like his own leaves, from the soil of this hemisphere and owing nothing to the Old World but a sense of perspective.

.

If this seems long and at times excessive in its praise of what, after all, is only a small part of the work of Walt Whitman, it must be charged to my own enthusiasm, stirred by the discovery of so much that is new and inspiring in what Whitman has called those "big strong days—our young days—days of preparation: the gathering of the forces."

CLEVELAND RODGERS.

KEW GARDENS, LONG ISLAND.

NOTE

The editors are deeply indebted to Colonel William Hester, President, and Herbert F. Gunnison, Publisher, of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for their co-operation in placing the valuable old files of that newspaper at their service for the extended period required in compiling this work.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	v
WHITMAN'S LIFE AND WORK, 1846-1847 .	xi

PART I

DEMOCRACY

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY	3
Perpetuity of the Democratic Spirit .	6
Swing Open the Doors!	9
Progress	12
The New World and the Old	14
Nativism	19
The Age	22
Encouragement to the Democrat .	24
Where the Great Stretch of Power Must be Wiielded	25
American Futurity	27
EUROPE AND AMERICA	29
Abroad	29
The Foreign Press on the American President	31
A Development of the Court-Life in Europe—The Two Royal Marriages	33
American Munificence and English Pomp	38

CONTENTS

	PAGE
[England's "Doings" in India and China]	40
Why Don't their Charity Begin at Home?	42
How Matters are Going on, Abroad	44
What Makes a "Gentleman" in the English Court	45
English Meanness	46
The Republic of Cracow "Extinguished"	47
More Radicalism in the Pope	50
GOVERNMENT	
Government	51
Force in Government	53
Duties of Government	54
Political Knowledge	55
You Cannot Legislate Men into Virtue!	57
Putting Down Immorality by Stress of Law	59
Nominal Piety	62
The Intemperance of Temperance	65
Shall we Promulge the Noble Temperance Reform, by Moral Means, or by Stringent Laws?	67
"No License"	69
One of the Results of the New Excise Law	70
Women should Possess their Own	72

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PATRIOTISM	75
Ode—By Walter Whitman	75
Sixty-Three Years Since—the 4th of December, 1783	76
Honor to the Hero! The Battle of Buena Vista—Bright Among the Brightest Emanations of American Glory!	80
An Emanation of Brooklyn Patriotism —Meeting of Citizens in Front of the <i>Eagle</i> Office to Testify their Sense of our Brilliant Victories in the South- West	83
One of the Bold and True	86
Independence Day	89
'Tis More than Sixty Years Since!	91
[The Passing of Revolutionary Veterans]	92

PART II

HUMANITY

HANGING, PRISON REFORM, UNFORTUNATES	97
Hurrah for Hanging!	97
Orthodox but Sanguinary	101
Our Answer to a Reasonable Question	104
Hurrah for Choking Human Lives!	107
The Law of Blood—Shall Russ be Hung?	109

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The "Law of Blood"	110
What the Defenders of the Gallows Say and an Answer thereto	113
A Woman Hung	116
The Poor Wretches	117
Vagrom Woman	120
 EDUCATION, CHILDREN	 121
An Hour in One of the Brooklyn Public Schools. Something More about Education and Teachers	 121
A Few Words to the Young Men of Brooklyn	 133
Free Seminaries of Brooklyn	136
School Officers' Duties	142
Flogging in our Brooklyn Schools	144
Something about Children	145
 LABOR, FEMALE LABOR	 148
The Sewing-women of Brooklyn and New York	 148
Shutting of Stores at 8 o'clock P.M.— Junior Clerks	 152
Servants	154
Cutting Down those Wages	156
A Working Woman's Savings	157
Liberality, Indeed!	158
A Little Paragraph with a Big Moral	158

CONTENTS

	PAGE
EMIGRANTS	159
The Latest Raw Head and Bloody Bones	159
Emigrants—Speed them West!	164
 ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND	 166
Ireland	166
More and Worse Suffering in Ireland,— What Shall be the Remedy?	167
Ireland and England—Eccentricity of English Charity	170
A Plea for the Stricken Ones!	172
Hope for Ireland!	173
Cannot Brooklyn too Say Something for Italy?	175
The Poor of Scotland	176

PART III

SLAVERY AND THE MEXICAN WAR

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY	179
Slavers—and the Slave Trade	187
[“Abolition” Extremism Denounced]	191
Set Down your Feet, Democrats!	194
Democratic Doctrine	194

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Most Emphatic Expression of Opinion on an Important Subject ever Given by the Empire State! . . .	197
Slavery in New Territory . . .	198
The Opinions of Washington and Jefferson on an Important Point . . .	199
New States: Shall they be Slave or Free?	200
Rights of Southern Freemen as well as Northern Freemen.—Mr. Calhoun's Speech	203
American Workingmen, versus Slavery .	208
Real Question at Issue!	214
Some Reflections on the Past, and for the Future	217
Verdict of the Undaunted Democracy of the Empire State in Behalf of the Jeffersonian Ordinance	221
A Question Answered	225
Slavery in Delaware	226
The Late Letter of Senator Cass .	227
 THE UNION OF STATES	 229
The Next Blessing to God's Blessing.—Shall it be Jeopardized?	229
What an Idea!	234
The Union Now and Forever!	235
Disunion	238

CONTENTS

	PAGE
WAR WITH MEXICO	240
[The Mexican War Justified]	240
Annexation	242
More Stars for the Spangled Banner	244
Our Territory on the Pacific	246
The Victory	247
Abetting the Enemy	248
The Command of the American Army in Mexico	250
[“The Most Bloodless” War Ever Known]	252
The War	254
Peace with Mexico	255
Lengths of Whig Partizanship. In- famous Charges!	256
When Will the War be Ended?	259
Mr. Gallatin’s Plan of Settling our Dis- pute with Mexico	264
THE OREGON BOUNDARY DISPUTE	267
[John Bull’s Blustering about Oregon]	267
Very Excellent News	270
“Our Flag is There!”	270
A Great Evil Avoided	271

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Walt Whitman in his Prime <i>Frontispiece</i> From a crayon portrait by Kurtz, now in the possession of the Brooklyn Eagle.	
Whitman's Birthplace at West Hills, Long Island . . .	75
As the buildings appeared in 1920, after being repaired.	
Where Walt Whitman Taught School .	125
The old schoolhouse at Woodbury, Long Island, where Whitman was schoolmaster before he be- came a writer and editor.	
Manuscript of a Whitman Poem .	206
Facsimile of the manuscript of one of Whitman's poems with instructions to "Tom" Rome, one of the Rome brothers, printers, in whose office in Brooklyn the first edition of "Leaves of Grass" was printed. Published through the courtesy of Mrs. St. Clair McKelway, of Brooklyn.	

Part I

DEMOCRACY

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

April 20, 1847

To attack the turbulence and destructiveness of the Democratic spirit, is an old story—a tale told by many an idiot, and often signifying indeed “nothing” save that the teller is too shallow to be more than a mechanical walker in the path of the ignorant black past, and look on those who turn aside therefrom as heretics and dangerous ones. Why, all that is good and grand in any political organization in the world, is the result of this turbulence and destructiveness; and controlled by the intelligence and common sense of such a people as the Americans, it never has brought harm, and never can. A quiet contented race sooner or later becomes a race of slaves—and when so become, there are always among them *still worse* slaves, bound mentally, who argue that it is better so, than to rise and destroy the tyranny that galls them. But with the noble Democratic spirit—even accom-

WALT WHITMAN

panied by its freaks and its excesses—no people can ever become enslaved; and to us, all the noisy tempestuous scenes of politics witnessed in this country—all the excitement and strife, even—are *good* to behold. They evince that the *people act*; they are the discipline of the young giant, getting his maturer strength. Is not this better than the despairing apathy wherewith the populace of Russia and Austria and the miserable German states—those *well-ordered* governments—endure the black-hearted rapacity of their rulers? We trow it is. And it is from such materials—from the Democracy, with its manly heart and its lion strength, spurning the ligatures wherewith drivellers would bind it—that we are to expect the great FUTURE of this Western World! a scope involving such unparalleled human happiness and rational freedom, to such unnumbered myriads, that the heart of a true *man* leaps with a mighty joy only to think of it! God works out his greatest results by such means; and while each popinjay priest of the mummary of the past is babbling his alarm, the youthful Genius of the people

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

passes swiftly over era after era of change and improvement, and races of human beings ere-while down in gloom or bondage rise gradually toward that majestic development which the good God doubtless loves to witness. . . . It is the fashion of a certain set to assume to despise "politics" and the "corruption of parties" and the unmanageableness of the masses: they look at the fierce struggle, and at the battle of principles and candidates, and their weak nerves retreat dismayed from the neighborhood of such scenes of convulsion. But to our view, the spectacle is always a grand one—full of the most august and sublime attributes. When we think how many ages rolled away while political action—which rightly belongs to every man whom God sends on earth with a soul and a rational mind,—was confined to a few great and petty tyrants, the ten thousandth of the whole; when we see what cankerous evils gradually accumulated, and how their effect still poisons society—is it too much to feel this joy that among *us* the *whole surface* of the body politic is expanded to the sun and air, and each man

WALT WHITMAN

feels his rights and *acts* them? Nor ought any member of our Republic to complain, as long as the aggregate result of such action is what the world sees it is. Do we not behold evolving into birth, from it, the most wondrous nation, the most free from those evils which bad government causes, the really widest extending, possessing the truest riches of people and moral worth and freedom from want, ever yet seen aneath the broad heavens? . . . We know, well enough, that the workings of Democracy, are not always justifiable, in every trivial point. But the great winds that purify the air, and without which nature would flag into ruin—are they to be condemned because a tree is prostrated here and there, in their course?

November 7, 1846

PERPETUITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT

THE Democracy of this country never can be overthrown. The true Democratic spirit

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

is endued with immortal life and strength. Our star glitters far above; clouds may now and then pass under it—but there it shines undimmed and untouched, and there it will shine, when the factions who decry it, with all that belongs to them, shall be remembered as the creatures of a day, and the offspring of corruption. Nor can the Democratic Party become essentially corrupt, either. For true Democracy has within itself a perpetual spring of health and purity. In its very nature it is at war with all selfishness and wickedness. It tempts no man or body of men with sinecures or swelling salaries. On the contrary, its defenders often have to bear odium and reproach; they are the marks at which wealthy insolence and supercilious pride level many an arrow. The leading spirits of the Democratic faith are always in advance of the age; and they have, therefore, to fight against old prejudices. The contest they engage in does not call for brute courage but moral courage—courage that can stand unappalled and without giving up the hate of enemies, the lukewarmness of friends, the ridicule and malice

WALT WHITMAN

of many a flippant popinjay who thinks himself of better clay than ordinary men. Why what had Jefferson, the Columbus of our political faith, to encounter? If we are to believe the chronicles of the past, he underwent, during what was called the "reign of terror," the most provoking indignities both personal and political. Leading Republicans were at that time taunted and hooted at in the streets. No one, we have the authority of Jefferson himself for saying, can realize the afflicting persecutions and insults they had to brook amid that gloomy period, the administration of the older Adams. But resting on their own staunch manly hearts, and defended by the breastplate of a righteous cause, they faltered not. Throwing to the winds all fear, they came out before the people, incessantly teaching and expounding their doctrine, and openly proclaiming the falseness and injustice of their opponents' creed. For *their* opponents had a creed. The result was that they triumphed. And *we* shall triumph. We stand here the inheritors of their principles and opposed to the same foe—the foe of equal rights. De-

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

mocracy must conquer again as it did then—and more certainly than it did then. We think so from two simple facts. One is that the great body of workingmen are more powerful and more enlightened now than they were in those days. The other is, that there is a mighty and restless energy throughout the length and breadth of this nation, for going onward to the very verge with our experiment of popular freedom.

July 28, 1846

***SWING OPEN THE DOORS!**

LET us not think because we are ahead of the tyrannical system of the Old World, that *we* of the New have no advance to make. Every season, indeed, witnesses a great onward movement, even now. Some twenty years since, and the doctrine of universal suffrage was a bold and dangerous doctrine in the eyes of many who thought they yielded to none in

* "I favor the widest opening of the doors," "Notes Left Over."

WALT WHITMAN

their Democracy. In [William] Leggett's* time, he was persecuted and "read out," for daring to question the infallibility of banks and high tariff. Yet what has the progress of a few circling suns done toward opening the minds of men to receive these heresies! In less than twenty years from this time, we venture to predict, with every assurance of safety, the nation will find, boldly promulgated in its midst, and supported by numerous and powerful advocates, notions of law, government and social custom, as different from the present day as Leggett's and Jefferson's to those of past ages. We must be constantly pressing onward—every year throwing the doors wider and wider—and carrying our experiment of democratic freedom to the very verge of the limit.

The old and moth-eaten systems of Europe have had their day, and that evening of their existence which is nigh at hand, will be the

* [Whitman was greatly influenced by William Leggett, one of the editors of the New York Post prior to 1836—ten years before the above was written. He made many references in *The Eagle* to Leggett, who died in 1839, and spoke of him with great admiration to Horace Traubel in 1888.]

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

token of a glorious dawn for the down-trodden people. *Here*, we have planted the standard of freedom, and here we will test the capacities of men for self-government. We will see whether the law of happiness and preservation upon each individual, acting directly upon himself, be not a safer dependence than musty charters and time-worn prerogatives of tyrants. Doctrines that even now are scarcely breathed—innovations which the most fearless hardly dare propose openly—systems of policy that men would speak of at the present day in the low tones of fear, for very danger lest they might be scouted as worse than Robespierrian revolutionists (that hack-nied bug-bear theme which has never been presented in its fairness to the people of this Republic) will, in course of time, see the light here, and meet the sanction of popular favor and go into practical play. Nor let us fear that this may result in harm. All that we enjoy of freedom was in the beginning but an experiment. We have been long enough frightened by the Phantom of the *Past*—let us dare to know that we are out of leading strings.

WALT WHITMAN

October 8, 1846

PROGRESS

RAIN is not drank in more eagerly by the parched earth, than the ears of men, for the past fifty years, have listened to those doctrines that would increase their political rights, and that teach improvement in governing. The progress of this democratic yearning for a better state bids fair to place the American people, twenty years hence, by elevating humanity itself, and disregarding mere wealth and circumstances—by a wholesome pruning of too much and too meddlesome laws—as far beyond what they now are, as what they now are is beyond what they were seventy years ago. There must be continual additions to our great experiment of how much liberty society will bear. . . . And not only here, on our own beloved soil, is this democratic feeling infusing itself, and becoming more and more powerful. The lover of his race—he whose good-will is not bounded by a shore or a division line—looks across the Atlantic, and exults to see on the

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

shores of Europe, a restless dissatisfaction spreading wider and wider every day. Long enough have priestcraft and kingcraft stalked over those lands, clothed in robes of darkness and wielding the instruments of subjection. The age of iron rule is passing away. A few divine spirits there are, who dared royalty, even in its own stronghold—and the Pen shows itself mightier than the Sceptre. The moth-eaten and age-decayed fabric of kingly government has been, and now is, attacked on all sides, and by the ablest champions. It is a strong caste—a structure of the feudal times; yet its enemies are stronger. Long did it resist all encroachments—firmly did it defy every besieger—loudly from its battlements came the shrill laugh of defiance and scorn—insolently flaunted its banners in the breeze. But the time is arrived when it can no longer withstand the united force of truth and might. Tower after tower falls. The gates have been broken in, and the laugh of defiance is changed to a disturbed look of apprehension. The citadel itself even now yields to a hundred lusty blows—and the period will ere many

WALT WHITMAN

years be here when every vestige will be swept away!

June 26, 1846

THE NEW WORLD AND THE OLD

[THE Native American Party, to members of which Whitman refers as "Nativists," was formed about 1842. It was based on hostility to the participation of the foreign-born in American politics, and directed attacks against the Roman Catholic Church. The "Nativists" carried the city elections in New York and in Philadelphia in 1844, and sent a number of Representatives to Congress. They were responsible for several destructive riots in Philadelphia and elsewhere, where Roman Catholics were attacked. The party soon lost power. Some ten years later, about 1853, there was formed the American Party, carrying out the same idea, which attained national significance. The American Party demanded that the government should be in the hands of native-born citizens. It was originally a secret organization and its members, being bound by oath, always professed ignorance of the organization. This caused them to be called "Know-Nothings." The party gained control of several States, North and South, in 1854 and 1855, and in 1856 nominated the former President Fillmore for

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

President, a nomination also made by the Whigs, although Fillmore was at the time traveling abroad. He was badly beaten, receiving only the electoral votes of Maryland. The party soon broke up, most of its members joining the Democratic Party.]

OUR good friends the "Native Americans," (we humor them to that title,) are determined to die game. They have made up their minds—at least their organs say so—to nominate a candidate for next fall's gubernatorial contest—and here and there for assemblymen. Well, be it so. We could wish that the Natives had withdrawn from a field where the people are so evidently against them. If, however, they insist on being beaten beyond the possibility of hope, those who disagree with their political principles are doubtless content.

Ah, who can look on the condition of the Old World, and assent to the views of this proscriptive party? On the shores of Europe are panting multitudes, who sicken with nakedness and starvation. They weep—they curse life—they die. Partly through the excess of population, and partly through the

WALT WHITMAN

grossly partial nature of the laws and the distribution of property, half the aggregate number of the natives of the Old World live in squalor, want and misery. Some seasons famine stalks through whole provinces and thousands are struck down ere the new moon fills her crescent. Then emaciated corpses strew the fields, and the groans of pale children are heard on the wayside, and savage murders are committed to get the means of life for dying women and infants. Amid the cities, too, (those great cities which many of our people would like to emulate in grandeur,) Poverty stalks unchecked, dragging by the hand his brother, Crime. There is too much mankind and too little earth.—What horrors are every month to be seen in Ireland, from Bantry Bay to the Giant's Causeway? What wretchedness in the hovels of the poor peasants!—What grief and hunger have reigned among her people ever since Castlereagh and Pitt consummated the atrocity of "the Union!" Nor are the shores of the Loire, the Seine, and the Garonne without their teeming wretchedness. And in one long

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

sweep from Land's End to Cheviot Hills—what proportion will the happiness of the masses hold to their degradations and wants?

And then look here at America. Stretching between the Alleghany Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, are millions on millions of uncultivated acres of land—long rolling prairies—interminable savannahs, where the fat earth is covered with grass reaching to a height unknown in our less prolific north—forests, amid whose boughs nothing but silence reigns, and the birds are not shy through fear of human kind—rich openings by the side of rivers—trees and verdure making from year to year their heavy deposits on the remains of the trees and verdure that have decayed before them. The mind becomes almost lost in tracing in imagination those hidden and boundless tracts of our territory—

Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound
Save his own dashing.

We perhaps wonder what can be the intention of the Creator in leaving for so long a time

such capacities for human existence and comfort undeveloped. We lose ourselves in the anticipation of what may be seen there in future times—the flourishing cities, the happy family homes, the stately edifices of public improvement, the sights and sounds of national prosperity.

How, then, can any man with a heart in his breast, begrudge the coming of Europe's needy ones, to the plentiful storehouse of the New World? It is unjust to mankind—insulting to the great Common Father of all men—to denounce and proscribe the people of the crowded East, who take a portion of what there is so much and to spare! And this great fact—the root and foundation of the whole question—is enough to settle “Native Americanism,” as it is mis-called. The popular instincts have seized upon that fact, and one or two kindred facts—and will not espouse a party which decries them. The Natives, therefore, may nominate governors and assemblymen for an age; they will hardly get any decent vote for them.

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

October 5, 1846

NATIVISM

THE *New York Gazette* in its lengthy answer to our Friday's remarks on "foreigners,"—and on the noble part taken for our American side in the Revolution, by many citizens of Ireland—brings forward nothing that seems to demand a special reply at our hands. Facts, policy, justice, and "right," all have uttered their voices—and the Nativists have uttered theirs;—and we are quite content to let the deliberate decision of Americans—(even those who are native born)—settle the mooted points. . . . The *Gazette* and its factions however, have harped quite long enough on the gratuitous twist *they* have given to the aphoristic caution: "Beware of foreign influence!" in an assent to which they bring Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Jay, Wolcott, &c., &c.,—How can the *Gazette* demean itself to preach from day to day, on what it must know well enough is an entirely perverted meaning of that sentence? which refers to the machinations of foreign potentates and governments,

their corrupt diplomacy, their spite, ill-will and wicked manœuvring. That it does not allude to the encouragement of immigration here, kind reception of immigrants, and their being taken into our "family circle," is evident enough not only from the entire course pursued by the distinguished men mentioned, but from the public ground of complaint against the British king, among other reasons for our Revolution, that he "obstructed emigration from abroad to our shores." . . . The idea of lugging in the noble Fathers of our earlier American time, to prop up Nativism is among the most impudent ideas possible. And it is about as ridiculous as it is impudent. All the Presidents except John Adams—and all, without exception, of American statesmen of any note—have invariably been in favor of incorporating in our nationality, as many immigrants from abroad as choose to come to us. And John Adams (intrinsically as honest and sincere a man as any of them,) was hurled from the Presidency for going counter, in a limited degree, to that liberality toward "foreigners," and that generous hospitality

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

for them, which *true American* “*public opinion*” *fixed upon at the beginning as one of the good elements of character here.* And any party or public man, that defies that element, will just as surely fall into ruin, and quickly, too, as that there is a sky above us.

—Will the *Gazette*, or any other Native organ, tell us especially what benefits we are to expect in this country from the establishment of Nativist principles? What harm has accrued, under the plan we have hitherto pursued? What earnest did the Natives give, while in power, of the high advantages they might, could, would, or should shower upon the land—or that portion of it which came under their sway? In New York City, they erewhile had undisturbed possession of power for a year. The only *improvement* they made, of which we are aware, was that they put to flight several scores of poor “foreign” apple-women who formerly were allowed to turn an honest penny by selling fruit and candies to little boys and girls at the street corners. This seems to have been not only the head and front, but the back, legs, and tail, of all their

WALT WHITMAN

mighty efforts! The Great Reform Party, which struggled so hard, and moved Heaven and earth in its behalf, rested from its huge labors after decapitating fifty or sixty honest grannies who endangered the liberties of the people with peppermints and pears! Is this a party to parade its claims before the American people—asking that all others shall “knock under” to *it*?

The plain truth is, if nearly all which the enemies of the adopted citizens say against the latter were actually true, there are so many other issues upon which to have political parties—such far more important measures which affect the very vitals of the national weal—that this single point of Nativism deserves to hold but a feather’s weight.

June 23, 1846

THE AGE

IT is a sort of stereotyped fashion among speakers to the public, to compliment “the age in which we live.” The truth is, indeed, that humanity has made (no very profound

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

discovery,) considerable advances in science and in politics. But is there any progress in simple happiness?

The United States, most undoubtedly, are the *first* nation on earth—in defiance of cockney carpings, and foreign abuse. The pending war with Mexico has drawn out the evidence of this fact; the people *will move*, on the smallest occasion. And there is as much superiority in such a nation of freemen, over one which has the mightiest artificial army, as a human life and form, with its own volition, are superior to the most cunning piece of mere machinery. There is no other way. And for our part, we look on that increase of territory and power—not as the doubter looks—but with the faith which the Christian has in God's mystery.

—Over the rest of the world, the swelling impulse of freedom struggles, too; though *we* are ages ahead of them. But a few short years must pass, ere this impulse nourishes itself to a larger, perhaps full, development. Who shall say what spectacles will be witnessed on the breast of Old Earth, our mother, then?

WALT WHITMAN

May 3, 1847

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE DEMOCRAT

FROM the days of Washington, the course of the Democratic Party has been a course of success and triumph. We do not mean that our party has succeeded in every *election*—because there are very many minor contests, and some of vast importance, in which the Conservatives, (under their various names,) carried the day. But we mean to say that our *principles* have advanced, with a steady and sure progress. Every year has added something to our political or commercial knowledge; and decreased, thus, the hopes of the more illiberal among us; by whom we mean the citizens—many of them as candid and well-wishing as any others—who think that every thing is to be *regulated by law*. . . . And it is in this progress, and this invariable addition to the good, and diminution of the bad, that we find the auguries of the future. The Democracy must still succeed. Even the intelligent Whigs will probably acknowledge this; and with all their distrust of the

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

“common people” and of the integrity and intelligence of the masses, will hardly so degrade their own judgment, as to deny the likelihood of those masses, and the party they attach to, wielding political sway in the aggregate. Such thoughts as these are well to dwell upon: the lover of his fellows, and of the serene principles of political truth, will always find joy and encouragement in them.

April 2, 1847

WHERE THE GREAT STRETCH OF POWER MUST BE WIELDED

IT is to us a cheering and grand idea, that the agricultural and *domestic* West must eventually outtopple in means, extent and political power, all the rest of this Republic—and carry sway in what it listeth. The boundless democratic free West!—We love well to contemplate it, and to think of its future, and to think how widely it will minister to human happiness and rational liberty. The slave States are confessedly either stationary, or on a very slow progress, or in an actual decline.

WALT WHITMAN

The Atlantic States, with a rush after wealth, and the spread among them of effeminating luxuries, need a balance wheel like that furnished by the agricultural sections of the West. Moreover in the connection, it must not be forgotten that New York, too, has in herself this balance wheel: a glance of the census will show an unrivalled productiveness and fertility in her grain-growing and other agricultural departments. Her broad interior, and the line toward the lakes, are like unto Mississippi valley in very many particulars.

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December 26, 1846

RADICAL, true, far-scoped, the thorough-going Democracy may expect (and such expecting will be realized,) great things from the West! The hardy denizens of those regions, where common want and the cheapness of the land level conventionalism, (that poison to the Democratic vitality) begin at the roots of things—at first principles—and scorn the doctrines founded on mere precedent and

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

imitation. . . . There is something refreshing even in the extremes, the faults, of Western character. Neither need the political or social fabric expect half as much harm from those untutored impulses, as from the staled and artificialized influence which enters too much into politics amid richer (not really richer, either) and older-settled sections.

November 24, 1846

AMERICAN FUTURITY

THIRTY years from this date, America will be confessed the *first nation* on the earth. We of course mean that her power, wealth, and the happiness and virtue of her citizens will then obtain a pitch which other nations cannot favorably compare with. Her immense territory is filling up with a rapidity which few eyes among us have realized. And back of what can possibly be filled up in fifty years, lay enormous untravelled plains and forests, fat of their own riches, and capable of sustaining nations like the greatest in Europe. The mind is lost in contemplating such incalculable

WALT WHITMAN

acres—and the lover of his race, whose fellowship is not bound by an open or dividing line, yearns that the degrading, starving and ignorant ones of the Old World, whatever and whosoever they are, should be transplanted thither, where their cramped natures may expand, and they do honor to the great humanity they so long have been a blot upon.

. . . Yet it is well, as it is. For the time will surely come—that holy millennium of liberty—when the “Victory of endurance born” shall lift the masses of the down-trodden of Europe, and make them achieve something of that destiny which we may suppose God intends eligible for mankind. And this problem is to be worked out through the people, territory, and government of the United States. If it should fail! O, dark were the hour and dreary beyond description the horror of such a failure—which we anticipate not at all!

EUROPE AND AMERICA

February 11, 1847

ABROAD

THOUGH not of great political interest, the news from Europe which arrived yesterday, will probably fix the public attention more fully than anything short of great revolutions or wars. It seems to us that the signs bode the heaving up in Europe of the downtrodden people—and their efforts at throwing off those oppressive burdens of government, that, after all, are so closely connected with their evils—burdens, which, from far beginnings, cause those evils at last. For though we are not of the school which believes that government can confer happiness, the signs are plain that they have sovereign potency in the prevalence of misery.

In Ireland—poor, distressed, starving Ireland—a country rich by nature, but devastated by human means—the fainting people

WALT WHITMAN

offer a terrible lesson of the way in which a shameless system can destroy the bountiful capacities of a fertile land occupied by an industrious, shrewd, honest hearted race. In France, the smothered fires only wait the decay of the false one, the deceiver Louis Philippe, to burst forth in one great flame—not a flame, we ardently hope, like that of the old French Revolution—but one of a steady, healthy pure brightness. The mottled empire of Austria is filled with the seeds of rebellion—with thousands of free hearts, whose aspirations ever tend to the downfall of despotism; and the numerous petty German states, too, have caught the sacred ardor. In Switzerland, an insurrectionary movement is mentioned by the last accounts. Spain and Portugal form a “troubled sea,”—but oil for the waters there must be long, long yet, in coming. . . . We must not mention England, because she stands too far ahead of the others. The noble, staunch old country! With all her faults, and her injustice to others, if we were not an American, no other land but hers could satisfy our American wishes. In *her* borders

EUROPE AND AMERICA

proper there is already no need of revolution: for the mighty progress of unfettered public opinion is gradually achieving reforms—and haply will in a method of peace and quiet, remove the wrongs under which her people yet labor.

February 8, 1847

THE FOREIGN PRESS ON THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT

WITH all the world-fame of such a paper as the *London Times*, there is a good deal of fol-de-rol about it. The Brooklyn *Eagle* has been reading with huge amusement, L. T. of the last day of the last year—the leader whereof is an attempt to be very sarcastic on our good President Polk. It is one of the completest specimens, that leader, of the ex-cathedra style of sweeping denunciation that ever was seen. Not a single fact narrated in Mr. Polk's message (which is fortunately printed in the same issue,) is controverted—not a statistical figure met by other figures—not a historical illusion rebutted.—But the whole is dashed at by one stroke of the pen—

by the charge of wholesale falsehood—by attempts at the tallest sort of the assumption of scorn and hauteur. . . . We have heard a great deal in this country (and B. E. has itself given in somewhat to that belief,) of the superiority of the tone of the London and Paris press over our cheaper and more diffused press—lower in tone, because thus cheaper and wider diffused, (as shoes “for the million,” cannot rival the ten dollar boots of the “upper ten,” though they may be more substantial). But if the style of this attack on the American President is anything in the neighborhood of a taste of the usual quality of the foreign press, we give up our belief for ever! Not one of the *N. Y. Herald's* flippant editorials—not one of the *Express's* common-place ones—not one of the *Courier's* blustering ones—can much go beyond this unlogical stringing together of meaningless phrases, which prove nothing with all their loudness!

Meantime, while the foreign press—a good portion of it, at least—is pouring out ridicule on this Republic and her chosen ones—Yankeedoodledom is going ahead with the

EUROPE AND AMERICA

resistless energy of a sixty-five-hundred-thousand-horse-power steam engine! It is carrying everything before it South and West, and may one day put the Canadas and Russian America [Alaska] in its fob pocket! Whether it does these things in a conventionally "genteel" style or not, isn't the thing: but that it will tenderly regard human life, property and rights, whatever step it takes, there is no doubt. At all events, Yankeedoodledom will never *never* be guilty of furnishing duplicates to the Chinese war, the "operations of the British in India," or the "extinguishment of Poland." Let the Old World wag on under its cumbrous load of form and conservatism; we are of a newer, fresher race and land. And all we have to say is, to point to fifty years hence and say, Let those laugh who win!

November 10, 1846

A DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURT-LIFE IN EUROPE.—THE TWO ROYAL MARRIAGES

EVEN at this distance from the scene of action, there is no small interest felt in the

marriages of the young Queen of Spain, and of her still younger sister, the Infanta Maria Louisa. The Britannia's foreign news (which we gave yesterday) states the consummation of the marriages; and it is settled as far as royalty allows those things to be settled—that is to say until paramount reasons of state, disunite those who have been “joined together” in the name of the Highest heavenly Power. And we could, perhaps, hardly satisfy our readers better (for the space it occupies), than to glean from the foreign papers a tolerably full account of the circumstances connected with these matches—intimately blended as they are, not only with affairs of state, but with affairs that come home to the “business and bosoms” of every man and woman—every lad and lass—in the world. It is not unprofitable, too, for a *republican* to read such things—to read of a large civilized, tolerably rich nation, subjected to the most dirty machinery of a court, the centre whereof is a poor child, only sixteen years old, brought up partly under the control of a vile, licentious mother, partly under that of a coarse lying

EUROPE AND AMERICA

governess, and much of the time surrounded by circumstances that must have drenched all the purity out of her, even as a child. It is profitable, we say, for *us* here to see how such things are managed in the courts of the continent of Europe—those courts to which the people there look for example, and for government. How degrading to all that is good and independent in our nature! How emasculating to the vigor and virtue of a nation, to have such pestilential influences over and about it! Why we would rather see the party wranglings of this Republic made ten times hotter—the extremes of excitement carried ten times farther—and let the land stand its chance under their action ten times oftener—than allow the moral air, circulating to every living one among us, to be tainted with one such deed as this manoeuvred and most wicked Spanish marriage! and have our people *look up* to it and those who do it. . . . The two marriages to which we allude, came off on the 10th of Oct. last, and were—the first between the Queen Isabel of Spain, and her cousin, Don Francisco de Assis, a great dull calf of a fellow,

with no good qualities bodily or mental;—the second between the Duke of Montpensier, a son of the King of France, and Maria Louisa, sister of Queen Isabel. The parties are all youthful enough. “Queen Isabella was born at Madrid on the 10th of October, 1830. Her majesty is consequently sixteen years of age. His royal highness the Infanta Don Francisco de Assis was born on the 13th of May, 1822. He was twenty-four years of age in the month of May last. The Duke of Montpensier was born at Neuilly on the 31st of July, 1824. His royal highness is consequently more than twenty-two years of age. Donna Maria Louisa Ferdinanda, Infanta of Spain, was born on the 30th of January, 1832. Her royal highness is fourteen years and nine months of age.” . . . Now all this, as to age, sounds prettily to the ear. But it is different in reality. The Child-Queen is forced into her marriage—the bridegroom being an ugly—stupid, unmanly fellow—with nothing, according to accounts, that a girl would wish for in a husband, but with everything to make the match, on personal considerations, an unhappy

EUROPE AND AMERICA

one: but she is fated, and has to bear the self-sacrifice. . . . The other marriage is not quite so bad—but is bad enough, still. It is a sort of fortune-hunting match on the part of the Frenchman. The little girl has a large sum of money; and will be heiress to the throne if her sister, the present Queen, dies without children, and everybody says she will possess no children. (Princes, it seems, have their tricks to play, like ordinary men.) But the Queen's marriage is the dark feature of the whole transaction. * * * *

It sickens one quite, to think that thousands and millions of people—people innate with the same generous and honest traits that mark the good of this, and every other country,—are governed by a complicated tangle of which selfishness, treachery, sensuality, and depravity, make up so large a portion, and of which such doings as we have mentioned are the fruits. We can well afford—we of America—to hear without murmur the taunts of the *artificial-trained* ones of the Old World, at our roughness and huskiness; for under that roughness and husk, we have the sound heart, the

WALT WHITMAN

uncorrupted core of primal fresher soul, which would scout such a development of moral rottenness as those courts sanction, with one unanimous, prompt, shrieking yell of scorn, hate, and horror, so wild and high that the old fabric of royalty itself might come tumbling in ruins to the ground!

July 16, 1846

AMERICAN MUNIFICENCE AND ENGLISH POMP

NONE would deprecate, more than we, the encouragement of a bigoted and vindictive hate toward England from this country. But we know that there are men among us, and their name is legion, who so admire the British fabric of government, and certain items in the system of British policy, that they are not ashamed openly to profess a desire that this nation should assimilate somewhat nearer than it is to both. And our newspapers should never hesitate boldly to exhibit to the public gaze the *facts* which prove the folly and misery of that splendid yet wretched system which has made our mother-land so full of outside gran-

EUROPE AND AMERICA

deur and inside destitution. We are apt to admire the wealth and pomp of show, on state occasions, in England—than which indeed nothing in other lands can go beyond; and we frequently, at times of public parade here, find cockneys looking on, and turning up their noses with profound contempt, and telling you "'Ow much hextraordinary better was 'er Majesty's coach and 'orses, when she went to the 'ouse of lawds," etc., etc. Very likely; and good reason. It was stated [some] time ago that the sum of money appropriated by Parliament to the annual maintenance of the royal stables is *more than twice* that appropriated for Public Education over the whole British Empire! American liberality is shown not in matters of vain and childish display—not on baubles and gew-gaws, and robes of state, and gilding and satin-cushioned carriages for officers of state—but in munificent grants for the support of Free Schools, in huge outlays for internal improvements, in the construction of mighty and useful works, such as the Croton aqueduct—a performance which all Europe cannot parallel!

WALT WHITMAN

Nor do the sins of England consist merely in her extravagant pomp. That vaunted banner wafting in "the battle and the breeze" so long—how true is a Boston poet's description of the symbols of its colors:

England whence came each glowing hue
That tints your flag of meteor light!—
The streaming red, the deeper blue,
Crossed within the moonbeam's pearly white?

The blood and bruise—the blue and red—
Let Asia's groaning millions speak;
The white—it tells of color fled
From starving Erin's pallid cheek!

July 29, 1847

[ENGLAND'S "DOINGS" IN INDIA AND CHINA]

DIVERS English gentry who favor the public hereabout with their perpetrations, through the *Brooklyn Advertiser*, are very indignant because an American print suggests that if China were to employ a Yankee force, and Yankee artillery, to man her forts and beat back her gain-worshipping invaders, the result would not be so safe to the said invaders.

EUROPE AND AMERICA

Now don't get excited, Messrs. Englishmen! You have been abusing the people of this country, and our government, a long time, for the Mexican War; but you never say a word about *your country's* doings in India and China. And though *you* think it "supremely ridiculous," and an "evidence of verdance and folly," to suppose that Yankees can hold their own against your countrymen in fight, yet Saratoga and Yorktown *did* tell something of a story in our favor. It is rather strange, though, that a budget of Englishmen should be put in control of an American press, and be allowed to amuse themselves by sneers and insults not only toward upright individual citizens, but against the country, and the national name. Let us not be misunderstood, however, in one thing. England, with all her failings, is a grand and stout-hearted nation—the race, of all others, which has done best for civilization and humanity—even though, as in all unrepblican governments, wicked men and wicked counsels now and then prevail. Yes; England has a towering greatness and glory—has in her borders thousands of lovers

WALT WHITMAN

of right and freedom; but she too has many sneaking, unprincipled offspring, worthy of her vileness, but unworthy of her greatness. The worst of it is, that some of these personages, strange as it may seem, get control of American newspapers!

February 10, 1847

WHY DON'T THEIR CHARITY BEGIN AT HOME?

THE Chinese, in their grotesque but vivid way, have a proverb alluding to certain characters whom they compare to lamps 'hung on high poles, the light of which is seen at a great distance, but cannot be noticed at all for some space around the foot of the pole. This simile, it seems to the Brooklyn *Eagle*, can with prodigious propriety be launched at the persons engaged in the following bit of tom-foolery—the paragraph describing which we copy from the New York *Tribune*:

GRAND REMONSTRANCE AGAINST SLAVERY

It is proposed in the London *People's Journal* to get up a kind but faithful remonstrance against American

EUROPE AND AMERICA

slavery, to be signed by 3,000,000 of the people of Great Britain—a number equal to that of our slaves.

With all the greatness, wealth, and activity of the British empire, there is hardly one nation on earth where the labor of the philanthropist, of the cutter down of unfair laws and unjust rules and distinctions, of the lightener of human misery, are more called for! Thousands and millions of *slaves* exist in the confines of that kingdom, to whose lot the condition of the South Carolinian negro is paradise. “Slaves cannot breathe in England”? says her vaunting poet? Indeed the phrase is true, though in another sense from what its author meant. They are suffocated with their own penury and degradation. . . . Nor this alone: in the Asiatic possession of Great Britain exists slavery of the worst kind—exists ’neath the umbrage of the authority of the crown. Slaves count not by thousands but by millions;—and why do these British philanthropists not exert a few of their spare sympathies for the Asiatic slave, too? When they obliterate the foul bondage of their fel-

WALT WHITMAN

low white men at home, and of their Asiatic provinces, *then* it is quite time enough to go abroad.

There is reason in all things: that the taking by a rich man of a poor boy from the streets, and furnishing him with education and clothing, evidences a noble soul, would be the first judgment of the world—until the world knew that the rich citizen *had many children of his own*, whose weal he not only neglected, but treated them with contumely, and brought them up in ignorance, vice and want.

May 18, 1847

HOW MATTERS ARE GOING ON, ABROAD

THE day-dawn of rational freedom is accompanied by a most encouraging brightness, just now. If it be not presumptuous to make such a suggestion, it seems as though Providence, through adversity, suffering, and other depression, were preparing the way for the future good of the generations of Europe—for lifting them out of that mere animal existence—and bad enough at that—in which the masses

EUROPE AND AMERICA

for ages have been entangled. Never have such rapid strides been made toward something like popular liberty, in Europe, as are now being made; not so much by the volition of the common people themselves, but by circumstances. It is as though the great wronged Genius of our race had grown a-weary of oppression and deceit in government (as well she may!) and had interceded with the Highest to work forth events which should help to birth the good chances for *man*. And yet not so: as in the august harmony of God's works—the mighty system of causes and effects—such a state as has existed among the monarchies of Europe, could hardly have produced any other than such results. * * * *

August 7, 1847

WHAT MAKES A "GENTLEMAN" IN THE ENGLISH COURT

WHEN Prince Albert and Queen Victoria part, if there are no "gentlemen" in waiting, one of the maids of honor has to open the door for the prince! In this single little fact lies a

WALT WHITMAN

quarto of comments on the difference between the Old World and America. In that interminable and populous range of states in the valley of the Mississippi, comprising many millions of people, we don't believe there is one single American born, temperate, white citizen who would accept the English coveted position of "gentleman" in waiting.—Nor is there one "male creature," of American birth or at least of true American education—in the United States, who would allow a lady to perform the menial service of "opening the door" for him. The refined Europeans find fault with the citizens of this Republic, particularly its western sections, for the primitiveness and want of polish.—Perhaps the complaint is warranted. But the *heart* of the national politeness is fresh and sound, at any rate.

December 13, 1847

ENGLISH MEANNESS

THE English writers, while, of course, not without good and noble traits, show, almost without exception, a most infamous and spite-

EUROPE AND AMERICA

ful meanness toward this country, in the matter of the Mexican War. We do not mean that we blame them because they condemn the origin of the war—the continuation of it, too, if they please; for it is to be expected that they should take such an unfavorable view of those points. But they do not stop with this. They vitiate the facts that relate to the battles and our victories. Nearly all of them keep back the truth; and instead of advising their readers of any of those feats of arms and high emprise, that the history of this war is full of, they turn off every one of such deeds and of our victories as a mere chance thing! Perhaps it galls them: it certainly arouses their malignance. Yet why should it? Why should they not record with pride, the great courage and dauntless bravery, and unequalled perseverance, of *their descendants*?

December 19, 1846

THE REPUBLIC OF CRACOW “EXTINGUISHED”

WE have occasionally (like other fault-finders,) expressed vexation at the exaggerated

WALT WHITMAN

mode of our American national vanity—the superlative complacency with which our state documents and 4th of July orations assume that we are not only “a leetle” but altogether ahead of the nations of Europe, in every thing that makes life valuable. But by’r troth! we sometimes read of things done—and done with impunity—*by* the princes *to* the men of Europe which make us think that were American vanity for what we have and do here, doubly exaggerated and made ten times as superlative, it would not go a bit too far. . . . Listen, men of the New World! but for one hour to the tale of oppression (a monotonous sentence, but not near as monotonous as the long and dreary reality which it signifies)—to the hellish wrongs of the coroneted few on the continent of Europe toward the masses—which those masses tamely bear—and you will hardly fail to agree with us, in this thing. . . . Listen to this new tale of “Cracow extinguished”—of a people crushed, as a clown would crush a creeping insect by a spiteful stamp of his heel! Then compare the great scope of true freedom which men enjoy

here; for it is only by such comparison that we can begin to understand its value. We append the following paragraph from the London *Punch*—though its fanciful view is completely o’ertopped by the *facts* on which it seeks to throw a dash of imagination:

DREADFUL OUTRAGE ON THE CONTINENT

Particulars have been sent to the *Hue and Cry* of a most daring robbery that has been committed at Cracow. It seems that when everything was quiet, three notorious offenders got into the grounds by force, broke through a treaty that stood in their way, demolished everything of value they found in the houses of legislature, turned the whole concern topsy-turvy and have not left a vestige of the old place standing. One of the offenders who is well known to the police by the name of Austria, is still in possession. His two confederates have been content with their share of the booty, and have returned to their old haunts. Their designations are Russia and Prussia. No means have been taken as yet for the restoration of the stolen property. It is supposed that the authorities are holding back in the hopes of a reward being offered.

[The town of Cracow was made a free state by the Congress of Vienna. A revolt in February, 1846, furnished the pretext for the “extinction” of the “republic” by Austria, Prussia and Russia, in spite of the protests of France and England.]

WALT WHITMAN

January 27, 1847

MORE RADICALISM IN THE POPE

THE Pope has abolished the custom of kissing the cross on his slipper, commonly called "Kissing the Pope's toe," and instead extends his hand to be kissed.

GOVERNMENT

July 26, 1847

It may seem a tall piece of coolness and presumption, for an humble personage like ourself to put *his* opinions of governments on the same page with those of the wise men of the ancient days; but, as a common engineer, now, could tell Archimedes things to make the latter stare, so the march of improvement has brought to light truths in politics which the wisest sages of Greece and Rome never discovered. And it is, at the same time, painful to yet see the servile regard paid by the more enlightened present to the darker past. The recognized doctrine that the people are *to be governed* by some abstract power, apart from themselves, has not, even at this day in this country, lost its hold—nor that to any thing more than the government must the said people look for their well-doing and the prosperity of the state. In such a form of rule as ours this dogma is particularly inconvenient; because it makes a perpetual and fierce strife

between those of opposing views, to get their notions and doctrines realized in the laws.

In plain truth, "the people expect too much of the government." Under a proper organization, (and even to a great extent as things are,) the wealth and happiness of the citizens could hardly be touched by the government—could neither be retarded nor advanced. *Men* must be "masters unto themselves," and not look to Presidents and legislative bodies for aid. In this wide and naturally rich country, the best government indeed is "that which governs least."

One point, however, must not be forgotten—ought to be put before the eyes of the people every day; and that is, although government can do little *positive* good to the people, it may do an *immense deal of harm*. And here is where the beauty of the Democratic principle comes in. Democracy would prevent all this harm. It would have no man's benefit achieved at the expense of his neighbors. It would have no one's rights infringed upon and that, after all, is pretty much the sum and substance of the prerogatives of

GOVERNMENT

government. How beautiful and harmonious a system! How it transcends all other codes, as the golden rule, in its brevity, transcends the ponderous tomes of philosophic lore! While mere politicians, in their narrow minds, are sweating and fuming with their complicated statutes, this one single rule, rationally construed and applied, is enough to form the starting point of all that is necessary in government: *to make no more laws than those useful for preventing a man or body of men from infringing on the rights of other men.*

January 2, 1847

GOVERNMENT

ONE of the favorite doctrines of leading Whigs teaches the intricacy and profundity of the science of government. According to them, the most elaborate study and education are required in any one who would comprehend the deep mysteries, the hidden wonders, of the ruling of a nation, and the controlling of a people. Nor is this doctrine confined altogether to the Whigs: many in our own ranks

WALT WHITMAN

acknowledge its truth, and infer from its premises. We have Democrats, and not obscure ones either, who hesitate not to act, (whatever they may say,) in a manner acknowledging assent to the same views. Really, however, the principles that lie at the root of true government, are not hard of comprehension. The error lies in the desire after *management*, the great curse of our Legislation: every thing is to be regulated and made straight by force of statute. And all this while, evils are accumulating, in very consequence of excessive management. The true office of government, is simply to preserve the rights of each citizen from spoliation: when it attempts to go beyond this, it is intrusive and does more harm than good.

November 13, 1846

FORCE IN GOVERNMENT

THERE is not a greater fallacy on earth than the doctrine of *force*, as applied in government. We of course allude to the physical, not moral, force—to compulsion, as it may be called,

GOVERNMENT

though it very seldom compels the effect it desires. Every body knows the old paradox that "A little is greater than much." So it frequently is in laws. Multiply laws, confuse the people ruled by a legion of entangled statutes, and there is not near as much harmony, (the aim of all good government,) as though laws were few, simple and general!

. . . It is pretty well understood, now, among thinkers who reason in their own minds, and not in the minds of the past, that unless men are laws unto themselves, statutes are useless, except for the purpose of protecting rights, property, personal safety, &c. from outrage. Let any man take the various histories of various nations—and amid all the different versions of the same occurrence, he will find one perpetual train of proofs of the truth of the foregoing truism! And yet what a small proportion of men practically acknowledge it!

April 4, 1846

DUTIES OF GOVERNMENT

The end of all governments is the happiness of the whole community; and

WALT WHITMAN

whenever it does not secure that, it is a bad government, and it is time it *was altered*.—New York *Globe*, March 28, [1846]

WE snip out this little paragraph from our New York contemporary because it affords us a chance of nailing a very wide though foolish error. It is only the novice in political economy who thinks it the duty of government to *make* its citizens happy.—Government has no such office. To protect the weak and the minority from the impositions of the strong and the majority—to prevent any one from positively working to render the people unhappy, (if we may so express it,) to do the labor not of an officious inter-meddler in the affairs of men, but of a prudent watchman who prevents outrage—these are rather the proper duties of a government.

Under the specious pretext of effecting “the happiness of the whole community,” nearly all the wrongs and intrusions of government have been carried through. The legislature may, and should, when such things fall in its way, lend its potential weight to the cause of virtue and happiness—but to legislate in direct be-

GOVERNMENT

half of those objects is never available, and rarely effects any even temporary benefit. Indeed sensible men have long seen that "the best government is that which governs least." And we are surprised that the spirit of this maxim is not oftener and closer to the hearts of our domestic leaders.

March 19, 1847

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

WE were impressively struck with the remark of an intelligent acquaintance, in a street walk the other day: "How many," said he, as we were talking of politicians, "how many, do you suppose, know the fundamental principles of our Republic's Constitution?" The suggestion is not an inappropriate one. Of the prodigious number of persons to whom politics, political argument, and political expression, may be said to be the principal business of their lives, how few, indeed, know the Constitution! how few know anything of the history of the government, or the difference in the codes of the States, and their altered

laws!—And yet in this country, *every* politician should possess such knowledge. How can a man presume to enlighten others, on subjects where he has himself not mastered the elements? It is true, every citizen entertains a general idea of the country—how the continent was originally made known to Europe by the adventurous spirit of one Columbus, (though whether that personage landed on Long Island, or not, they cannot precisely say),—how toward the later years of the past century, our grandpapas had a quarrel with the British government, about some tea and taxes—how General Washington managed to get the better of the imperial armies, or rather prevented their getting the better of the Americans—how, (but *exactly* how, they are oblivious as to,) a government was afterward formed—since when there have been several presidents, Jefferson, Monroe, Gen. Jackson, Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, and so on. But all this knowledge, (we respectfully submit,) is the barest sort of outline, the naked ribs, of the *full* knowledge which an American politician should possess.

GOVERNMENT

March 18, 1846

YOU CANNOT LEGISLATE MEN INTO VIRTUE!

SOME winters ago, a wag of a legislator got up in the Capitol at Albany, and moved that from thenceforth, "all licentiousness and immorality be abolished in the State of New York." The immediate cause of the witty fellow's proposition, we believe, was one of those seduction bills which are annually brought before the Legislature, and just as annually laid on the table.

Though the joke was good, we consider the philosophy of our wag to have been better still. It is all folly to expect from *law*, the popular virtues, worth, and self-denial, which must come from entirely different sources—from the influence and example of home, from well-rooted principles, from a habit of morality. We have therefore little faith in laws that interfere with morals. We have no faith at all in the efforts of law to make men *good*. That is not the province of the statute-book at all.

"The Directors of the Fall River Railroad,"

WALT WHITMAN

says the *Mirror* of last evening, "have declared by vote that no ardent spirits shall be transported over their road." Erudite directors! Profound corporation! Sage, grave men! The world owes you statues and portraits, for the new way you have invented to baffle Bacchus! And the sensible Temperance men—*they* must be "transported," with your wisdom, if old Hollands ain't over your road!

It is amazing, in this age of the world—with the past, and all its causes and effects, like beacon lights behind us—that men show such ignorance, not only of the province of law, but of the true way to achieve any great reform. Why, we wouldn't give a snap for the aid of the Legislature, in forwarding a purely moral revolution! It must work its way through individual minds. It must spread from its own beauty, and melt into the hearts of men—not be forced upon them at the point of the sword, or by the stave of the officer.

The license law passed in this State two sessions since gives the citizens of each locality, (except the city of New York, where it was

GOVERNMENT

more needed than any other part of the land) the power to decide by ballot whether they will furnish licenses to taverns or not. This we consider a just and equitable law; it is by no means one of those compulsory things that are objectionable both on account of their illegality and bad policy. It leaves the matter with the citizens of every individual district to settle for themselves by ballot—the most radically democratic form of settlement known to human institutions.

The Directors of the Fall River Railroad, State legislators, and all other functionaries, should know that meddlesome laws, directed against even prejudices and superstitions, do more harm than good. Mankind will resist being driven on a road, which they would travel willingly, when persuaded by gentleness, and convinced by reason. Were all the railroads in the United States, to adopt a similar rule with the Fall River one;—were all the States to pass stringent laws against intemperance—would there be any less liquor consumed, or any fewer tipsy people in consequence?

WALT WHITMAN

March 27, 1846

PUTTING DOWN IMMORALITY BY STRESS OF
LAW

ONE of our contemporaries in New York has a spirited declamatory article, this morning, on the subject of the Seduction Bill—and incidentally on the necessity of legislation to prevent the beginnings of crime and immorality. Does the writer suppose that *laws* will make men moral? Shortsighted reasoning! There is not a greater fallacy in the world.

The Seduction Bill at present before the Legislature must be devised with more than usual cunning, if it can do any good at all. The indignant allusion to gross instances of licentiousness, and the atrocious betrayal of woman's confidence, which marks the argument in behalf of that bill, are foreign to the question altogether. Laws have very little to do with morals. Where the popular virtue is low, no legislation can make it any higher by statute. Where it is elevated, there is of course no need of statute on the subject.

Many persons appear to think that if bills

GOVERNMENT

were passed against immorality—against seduction and intemperance, for instance—there would be less of those vices. Such a hope is absurd. Each individual, as far as his moral nature is concerned, is responsible to himself and his God only. When he trenches on the rights of others, that is a different thing. The laws then justly take cognizance of his conduct and punish him.

But—says the print to which we have alluded—the avenues to high crime are licentiousness and the tavern; why not take time by the forelock, and destroy those agencies,—thus avoiding crime both in the bud and in the fruit? Why not “join hands in rooting out from among us the grogeries and brothels which pollute the land, and repressing libertinism, by adequate though not vindictive penalties?” Simply, Sir Sophist, because no human being can become moral through the convictions and restrictions of another human being; but must be so through his own reason or not at all. Because, great as is the apparent ingenuity of the *prevention* argument, it amounts to nothing at all where the laws at-

WALT WHITMAN

tempt to enforce it. We can persuade, entreat, reason with, exert our logic and lungs to convince a man of what is right—but we can never *compel* him into it. The overt act alone places him under the authority of the strong arm.

—We generally expect a great deal too much of law. After all, government does not exercise anything like the influence for good or for evil, over us, that we are apt to imagine. We have grown in the way of resting on it to do many things which ought to be done by individuals—and of making it answer for much that society alone, (for government and society are distinct) is in truth the responsible author of. Ah, no man can be readier than we to unite in behalf of a true measure to prevent crime, or to reform it where it has once been allowed to get headway! But we would hunt immorality in its recesses in the individual heart, and grapple with it there—*but not by law*. We would direct our blows at the substance, not the shadow.

[I don't accept the temperance advocate so-called—neither do I accept the rum seller. . . . I remem-

GOVERNMENT

ber that men are not made moral by violent means—by being spurred this way and that. . . . They go or they don't go from an impulse within themselves or the want of it. Salvation can't be legislated.—“With Walt Whitman in Camden,” June 3, 1888.]

July 3, 1846

NOMINAL PIETY

OUTWARD observances of real sanctitude, it is undeniable, are good, so far as they mirror the inward heart. But there is a sad prevalence of foolish notions in the world, about certain mere *abstinences* from trifles, or *conformances* to trifles, making a saint out of a man. We see that in the goodly State of Rhode Island, (a gallant little State, barring her Algerinery!) the “Sabbath Union,” a religious gathering in session last week, passed a resolution urging their Executive Committee to use all exertions towards stopping the running of steam boats, railroad cars, and omnibuses on the Sabbath—to prevent the opening of livery stables for letting horses and carriages, markets for the sale of provisions, post offices, &c., on that day. Preposterous!

WALT WHITMAN

We remember this effort to stop the sale of groceries or provisions of any kind between Saturday midnight and Sunday midnight, has been attempted once or twice in New York. It has always failed, however; for the world is hardly disposed to go backward in such things. The efforts to stop Sunday mails, &c., have also failed, as every body knows.

To conclude and to be candid, in this matter, we have no faith at all in that sort of morality which is the result of coercive laws. In such outwardly pompous and inwardly rotten piety, as seizes hold of trifling derelictions, but forgets the spirit of all true religion, which disdains trifles and regards the inner soul, we behold little but food for contempt, ridicule, or pity! There is yet among us some of that intolerant and most miserable bigotry, which once started away in horror from the sound of a violin; and, in the mighty passions delineated by the great master of English song, could see nothing but devilish snares. There are remains yet of that detestable cant which sent men to hell for the smallest derelictions from orthodoxy. How many men there are

GOVERNMENT

at this moment hereabout, who—allowing that their sanctimonious going through the mere *forms* of religion *is* religion—yet serve the devil six days where they give one to God! Avaunt! ye vinegar-faced hypocrites! Did not our Saviour himself pull corn and distribute it on the Sabbath day, and rebuke those who nicely took him to task for his *immorality*?

January 29, 1847

THE INTEMPERANCE OF TEMPERANCE

WHAT our feelings and wishes are on the subject of temperance, may be gathered, (by those who take the trouble,) from the various earnest exhortations in behalf of that virtue which appear every week in our columns—those exhortations of *facts* stated, which are a thousand times more cogent than any abstract reasoning; also, they may be gathered from the tenor of the sketch published on our first page. Can any one say that the Brooklyn *Eagle* is remiss in its duty, to use what influence it may have, in helping along this noble moral reform? We trow not. We consider temperance one of the

grand regenerators of the age; and that all who, in truth of heart, labor in its promulgation, deserve well of heaven and of man!

But we cannot shut our eyes to as great a principle in politics as temperance itself is among the virtues—the principle of the liberty of traffic—the right of commerce freely to buy and sell—the absurdity of picking out some moral evil, one of a thousand, and swerving the influence of the laws aside from their proper sphere, into an attempt to legislate it out of the way. We cannot see the wisdom of such prohibitions as the following, 'which we find narrated in the *Journal of Commerce* of this morning:—"The Stockholders of the Fall River Railroad, nearly four hundred present, have voted that no alcoholic liquors should be carried over the railroad." Why don't the stockholders prohibit other "evils" also from passing over their road? There is the evil of licentiousness, in many of its phases—they might as well prohibit that!

Indeed we think not of restrictive physical force, employed by the laws, or by the regulations of public companies, to do the good

GOVERNMENT

which should be achieved entirely by the convinced reason of voluntary free agents. It is an unprofitable misapplication of means—a shirking of fair responsibility. It were just as right to prohibit those eatables, (and there are plenty of them) which cause disease and premature feebleness, from being sold, or being carried, as to prohibit drinkables. It were just as allowable to pass a law against the corset-makers and venders of stays for ladies, as against brandy. The former kill their thousands too; and lay the foundation for many a bodily decay and death.

March 13, 1847

SHALL WE PROMULGE THE NOBLE TEMPER-
ANCE REFORM, BY MORAL MEANS,
OR BY STRINGENT LAWS?

OUR Brooklyn *Eagle* must have been widely misunderstood by its readers, if they are not aware forthwith, what will be our prompt answer to the question in the foregoing headline. In achieving great moral reforms, we have very little faith in statutes. Of course,

WALT WHITMAN

statutes must be made to check the vicious, the thievish, the oppressive, from violating the physical rights of others. All rights must be guarded. But in his moral and mental capacity, man is the sovereign of his individual self. And if that phrase is not expressive enough, we mean to say that in matters which do not plainly contravene the legal rights of fellow citizens, the law has no business to interfere except in one or two instances—and those only by sufferance. . . . The miserable effect of all efforts to *legislate* men into religion and virtue, fill the pages of history, and furnish some of their blackest and most horrid items.

December 22, 1846

"NO LICENSE"

As a friend of Temperance—yielding to none in our desire to promulge and encourage that virtue—we feel desirous of entering our rejoinder, in an humble way, to the insolent and sophistical article in the *New York Tribune* of this morning, on the subject of the new

GOVERNMENT

Excise law regulating the traffic in ardent spirits. The *Tribune* acknowledges in effect, that the law don't work well, in those places where the "No License" vote carried the day. Of course it will not defend the "License" places. And now it wants the question again submitted to the people of the whole State, in a body, and tauntingly asks if the "Liberals" will "dare" submit it so. Whether they do or not makes no difference in the important *certainty* that if the question *were* submitted, and decided "No License," the same difficulties, only trebled in their amount, *would come back upon us all then!* Does not the *Tribune* see this? How can it ask such a submission in the face of its own acknowledgment that so many "men are ready and willing to violate the law," and that "Grand Juries refuse to find bills against notorious offenders on the assumption that the Excise law is unconstitutional?"

—Also, how strange it is, that—in the face of mountains of cogent "reasons why," in the shape of the facts of the past—men, in their advocacy of great and true moral reforms,

will not bend their efforts to *the reform* itself, and not adulterate its excellent purity, by throwing in the stained drops of petty political excitement, personal fear or favor, and so on! The duty of the promulger of all moral reforms is very simple—being nothing more than to advocate and illustrate, the more enthusiastically the better, his doctrine—and carefully abstain from identifying it or himself with any of the cliques or the passing notions of the time.

February 2, 1847

ONE OF THE RESULTS OF THE NEW EXCISE
LAW

BESIDES the fact that bar-rooms here remain open now, notwithstanding the city voted “no license,” there are several facts like the following from the late Hempstead paper, in Queens County on this island. Do we assume too much when we say, that any law which is *perfectly ineffectual* (see facts everywhere,) ought to be obliterated from the statute book? Does not such a law, and the

GOVERNMENT

open defiance to it, beget more or less analogical defiance to *all* law? . . . In transcribing the appended paragraph, it is hardly necessary to express contempt for the brutish propensities which find their favorite gratification in guzzling "toddlies" and "stiff horns." Intemperance is a vice whose horrid results are quite bad enough, without gaining additional impetus from the provoked spirit which men show when attempted to be constrained in such matters by physical force.

February 18, 1847

WOMEN SHOULD POSSESS THEIR OWN

IN one feature of the Wisconsin Constitution there is manifested a more enlightened spirit of progress and a most just sense of what we believe to be an important public duty, than seemed to actuate a majority of the members of our recent [Democratic] convention. Woman, in Wisconsin, is a being cared for, having rights to protect; rights considered of sufficient importance to find the organic law of the State a protecting shield. The holy

partnership formed by matrimonial alliance does not, in Wisconsin, destroy woman's individuality. All property owned by her before marriage, or acquired by her after, except that acquired from her husband, *shall be her separate property*. This is as it should be. She who shares in common with man the adversities incident to humanity, when they occur from causes beyond control, should, certainly, be made as secure as possible from the miseries entailed by the conduct of thoughtless and improvident men. There is, certainly nothing in the intellectual or social character of woman that renders her incompetent in a married state to exercise a proper use or make a proper disposition of property acquired by her industry, or inherited from others. A being who so deeply interests us as woman, should be carefully protected in the enjoyment of every right which is naturally hers.



PATRIOTISM

July 2, 1846

ODE—BY WALTER WHITMAN*

To be sung on Fort Greene; 4th of July, 1846.
The tune is "The Star Spangled Banner."

I

O, God of Columbia; O Shield of the Free;
More grateful to you than the fanes of old story,
Must the blood bedewed soil, the red battleground, be
Where our forefathers championed America's glory!
Then how priceless the worth of the sanctified earth
We are standing on now. Lo! the slopes of its girth
Where the martyrs were buried: nor prayers, tears, or
stones,
Mark their crumbled-in coffins, their white, holy bones!

2

Say! sons of Long-Island! in legend or song,
Keep ye aught of its record, that day dark and
cheerless—
That cruel of days—when, hope weak, the foe strong,
Was seen the Serene One—still faithful, still fearless,
Defending the worth, of the sanctified earth
We are standing on now, etc.

* Not included in Whitman's published works.

WALT WHITMAN

3

Ah, yes! be the answer. In memory still
We have placed our hearts, and embalmed there
forever!
The battle, the prison-ship, martyrs and hill,
O, may *it* be preserved till those hearts death shall
sever;
For how priceless the worth, etc.

4

And shall not the years, as they sweep o'er and o'er,
Shall they not, even *here*, bring the children of
ages—
To exult as their fathers exulted before,
In the freedom achieved by our ancestral sages?
And the prayer rise to Heaven, with pure gratitude
given
And the sky by the thunder of cannon be riven?
Yea! Yea! let the echo responsively roll
The echo that starts from the patriot's soul!

December 4, 1846

SIXTY-THREE YEARS SINCE—THE 4TH OF
DECEMBER, 1783

(WE love to seize these occasions of awaking
the purest patriotism—the more needed in the
too-much selfishness of political contests,
now.) . . . The old Broad Street Coffee-

PATRIOTISM

House—that yet stands in New York—was the stage of a sad and noble scene, sixty-three years since, this very day! the parting adieus of Washington and his officers and troops.—It was a strange scene too. It was a scene of joy, of grief, of exultation, of tears, of the highest hopes, of the most anxious fear. The joy and exultation were warranted by the victorious end of a war where freedom and high desires had to contend against the established government, and the settled prejudices of the world. The hopes were for the future. The tears and grief—ah! *they* outvied all the rest, in spite of fact and faith! In the hall of the Old Coffee-House (Francis's) [Fraunces's] were gathered the stout true men who led in our Revolutionary armies; the men who had patiently suffered many defeats—to gain triumph at last. There were Greene, and Gates, and Knox. There were the brave Steuben, and the impulsive Clinton. But ah! some were *not* there—for their bones were marrowless, and the earth hid them!—Some lay under the frozen air of Canada—and from that stretched their graves to the warm Alta-

maha, in the south. Montgomery had yielded up his life at Quebec; Wooster, at Danbury; Woodhull was barbarously murdered whilst a prisoner at the battle of Long Island; Mercer fell mortally wounded at Princeton; the brave and chivalric Laurens, after displaying the most heroic courage in the trenches at Yorktown, died in a trifling skirmish in South Carolina; the brave but eccentric Lee was no longer living, and Putnam, like a helpless child, was stretched upon a bed of sickness.

It is written that when Washington entered the room where his compatriots were assembled on this occasion, tears many and moist rolled upon his face; one of the few times when his iron-ribbed emotions burst the sway of his great will, and claimed the common outlet of human sorrow! There was a pause. At length Washington called for a glass of wine. It was brought him; and turning to his officers, he thus addressed them: "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take my final leave of you. I most devotedly wish your latter days may be as happy and prosperous as your former ones have been glorious

PATRIOTISM

and honorable." He then raised the glass to his lips, drank, and added: "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged to you, if each of you take me by the hand." Gen. Knox, who stood nearest, burst into tears, and advanced—incapable of utterance. Washington grasped him by the hand and embraced him. The officers came up successively and took affectionate leave. No words were spoken, but all was the "silent eloquence of soul." When the last of the officers had embraced him, Washington left the room followed by his comrades, and passed through the lines of light infantry. His step was slow and measured—his head uncovered, his large breast heaving, and tears flowing thick and fast as he looked from side to side at the veterans to whom he then bade adieu forever. Shortly an event occurred more touching than all the rest. A gigantic soldier, who had stood by his side at Trenton, stepped forth from the ranks, and extended his hand, crying, "Farewell, my beloved General, farewell." Washington grasped his hand in convulsive emotion, in both his. All discipline

WALT WHITMAN

was now at an end! the officers could not restrain the men, as they rushed forward to take the Beloved One by the hand, and the convulsive sobs and tears of the soldiers told how deeply engraven upon their affections was the love of their commander. Reaching the barge at Whitehall, through this most sad avenue, the retiring Leader entered it; and, at the first stroke of the oar, he rose, and turning to the companions of his glory, by waving his hat, bade them a silent adieu; their answer was only in tears; officers and men, with glistening eyes, watching the receding boat till the form of Washington was lost in the distance.

April 3, 1847

HONOR TO THE HERO! THE BATTLE OF BUENA
VISTA—BRIGHT AMONG THE BRIGHTEST
EMANATIONS OF AMERICAN GLORY

WE might, not improperly, (indeed in some points it would be better to do so,) give the following brief string of dispatches and letters, without a word of comment. And yet we

PATRIOTISM

cannot refrain from such comment—from throwing our little mite in the rushing flow of a nation's thanks to the noblest of living generals, and the bravest of armies! The following short letters, too, form one of those few grand histories written in a single page, involving an event so august that the bookman's art but mars, by the addition of mere style and rounded periods, its great proportions! They will live—this battle, and the victor in it—on the enduring records of our Republic and among the favorite and most turned to of all! Of the prodigiousness of the triumph, no further proofs are necessary than three very simple, crispy, laconic ones: 1st, the Mexican leader's summons to surrender—2d, the three line answer of the American general—3d, the *result*. A linked trinity, this, which stands at least on as high a platform as the classic "Veni, vidi, vici," of the Latin hero.

Five to one! only think of it! And the larger number the flower of their nation, splendidly appointed, swelling with elated thoughts, and spurred on by the thought of

vengeance for former defeats! And the smaller cut off from all communication with their fellows, unused to military obedience, lately familiarized with discipline, and pressed with the consciousness of such inferior strength. And to achieve a *complete* triumph under these circumstances! Do we say too much, then, in uttering what is the national utterance, "HONOR *to the* HERO!" the Bold and True?

Then the modesty of the man, in the very hour of his triumph. War's annals present no such brief, terse, comprehensive but unflorid dispatches as those whereby Gen. Taylor announces to the government his movements and his victories. Look at his reply to Santa Anna's summons; it is a bit of shaft-like, simple grandeur, that has *no* equal!

Whatever may be said of the evil moral effects of war, it seems to us plain that such events as this victory at Buena Vista, and our former victories in Mexico, must elevate the *true* self-respect of the American people to a far higher point than heretofore. Because, with all the charge of vainglory made against us by

PATRIOTISM

foreigners, our people do *not* hold that high-toned self-respect, becoming to such a great nation as ours really is. They do *not* seem to believe our first-class claims sufficiently *proved*; and though we are not of those who think that mere military superiority is by any means the principal part of such proof, it cannot be denied that unsurpassed brilliant successes in war—and continued ones, too—go far toward lifting up that desirable tone. Our naval victories in the last war with England, made a great revolution in the provincialness that had still lingered in the then new-fledged Republic.

April 16, 1847

AN EMANATION OF BROOKLYN PATRIOTISM—
MEETING OF CITIZENS IN FRONT
OF THE EAGLE OFFICE TO TESTIFY
THEIR SENSE OF OUR BRILLIANT
VICTORIES IN THE SOUTH-WEST

ONE can hardly say that the citizens of Brooklyn have not their goodly share of patriotic spirit; for the way they collected around our office last evening, (15th) to join

WALT WHITMAN

in testimonials of praise to our countrymen's glorious achievements in Mexico proved the contrary! At a given signal, a little before 8 o'clock, the whole broad front of the building, in not more than the space of three or four seconds, was changed from total darkness to a blaze of light. A transparency, inscribed with the now historical names of PALO ALTO, RESACA DE LA PALMA, MONTEREY, BUENA VISTA, and VERA CRUZ, shone clearly from the second story, and evinced to the multitude in front the reason of the proceeding.

There is hardly a more admirable impulse in the human soul than *patriotism*. And although it may sometimes be awkward in its development, or may go to extremes, it is in those respects like all other good qualities of human character; and one can respect the motive, even if the style of displaying it be not brilliant. Thus we admire most the patriotism of what are called by some "the common people," who form the great bulk and strength of the state. It is the custom of certain financial gentlemen to plume them-

PATRIOTISM

selves on a sort of abstractedness from such *common* traits; and they like better to stand upon their philosophy, and even lean to the other side, from that of the countrymen, in order to show their miserable "independence." This is a wretched ambition, and unworthy any ample mind. One's country, it is true, cannot always be perfectly just in every motion and action—neither can one's parent or wife, or dearest friend. But to go against either of the latter, to revile them, or to oppose them, were hardly more infamous than to revile or oppose the cause of one's native land. And cold must be the pulse, and throbless to all good thoughts—no true American's will it be—which cannot respond to the valorous emprise of our soldiers and commanders in Mexico. Nor does this pride in our victorious armies involve the least indisposition to the earliest possible honorable peace with Mexico. Heaven grant that we may now have peace! For with all the trophies our armies have gained, we can still say so with the most earnest soul. But it must be remembered that the desire on the part of our government for peace

WALT WHITMAN

with Mexico, must be met with a willingness for peace on the part of Mexico herself. Until that time arrives, the war is unavoidable.

November 18, 1846

ONE OF THE BOLD AND TRUE

A New York city print of this morning (18th) announces that the old dilapidated monument to Lawrence in Trinity church-yard is to be cleared away, and its place occupied by a new and massive one, designed by Mr. Upjohn, the architect, and now in process of preparation. We confess, for our part, to a kind of horror at any thing that seems like disturbing the ashes, or the mortal resting place, of the departed. And though this crumbled memorial of a gallant man was quite generally scouted—and though the common and commendable sentiment of the people demands the renewal of it—we cannot get entirely out of remembrance the idea put forth in Shakspeare's terrible antithesis: "Blest be he who spares these bones! But Curst be he *who moves these stones!*"

PATRIOTISM

But let us devote a few passing lines to the Buried One there. His remains lie in the south-western corner of the churchyard—and the old monument, lately covered with a rough pine shed, has (it was standing a few days since; when we copied it) the following inscription:

In memory of Capt. *James Lawrence*, of the U. S. Navy, who fell on the first day of June, 1813, in the 32nd year of his age, in the action between the frigates *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*. . . . He had distinguished himself on various occasions, but particularly while commanding the sloop of war *Hornet*, by capturing and sinking His Brit. Maj. sloop of war *Peacock*, after a desperate action of fourteen minutes. His bravery in action was only equalled by his modesty in triumph, and his magnanimity to the vanquished. In private life, he was a gentleman of the most generous and endearing qualities; and so acknowledged was his public worth that the whole nation mourned his loss—and the enemy contended with his countrymen who most should do him honor.

(*On the opposite side:*)

The hero whose remains are here deposited, with his dying breath expressed his devotion to his country. . . . Neither the fury of battle—the anguish of a mortal wound—nor the horrors of approaching death—could subdue his gallant spirit. His dying words were, “*Don’t give up the ship!*”

WALT WHITMAN

I have a foolish weakness, when any thing thrills me deeply, which in spite of all I can do, moistens my eyes. When I had finished copying the inscription, I found my paper blotched with tear-drops.

Surely there is nothing more excellent than the disposition to honor the names of heroes and brave defenders of the land—founded as it is in that noble passion, love of country. Never, O never let us forget him—this young sailor who died too early for the nation, but not too early for himself! What a day must that have been when he drew out of Boston Harbor, and the hearts of his countrymen beat high with the confidence of victory! What a moment, when struck down by the enemy's fire—enveloped in smoke and blood—the sounds and sights of carnage around him on every side—he was borne from the deck, overcome but not conquered—his last thought, his last gasp, given for his country!—Taken by the generous victors to Halifax, he was buried with those testimonials of illustrious merit, which became his exalted courage, and the character of a people never

PATRIOTISM

niggard in their admiration of true patriotism. But not long could his beloved Republic spare the remains of a child so dear to her, and so fit to be a copy for his brethren. His body was disinterred and removed to Salem, (N.E.) whence it was brought to New York and deposited in Trinity churchyard. . . . Sleep gently! Bold and True!

July 3, 1847

INDEPENDENCE DAY

TO-MORROW, then, is the Fourth of July—our American Independence Day! Hail to its ennobling associations! for *they* of course, comprise all that makes the anniversary such a glorious one! Hail to the ever-fresh memory of the worthies who made that day so holy! Is it not well to keep alive, in any and every way we can, thoughts and remembrances of that age, and the patriot statesmen and warriors? The bright example, planted in the firm foundation of the nation's love, will do more good than essays from a thousand theorists. Let the sages and the soldiers die—for

WALT WHITMAN

the great and immutable law of decay, in which is the mystery of new life, must ever hold its course. But the spirits of those sturdy heroes will live—and at times and anon, when the wild whirlwind of faction rises, and demagogues would strike the dagger in the dark, their phantom forms shall stalk into the council-hall, or hover before the eyes of the maddened people, or lay the icy grasp upon the traitor's lifted arm, or whisper a timely caution in the Senator's ear—to save or serve the land they loved so well when living.

Nor can many seasons elapse, ere all living links between us and that time of glory, will be destroyed. One by one, the men of those days have passed away to the grave, and now some trifling score only are left as visible and speaking memoirs of their brethren. In the course of nature, but a few revolvings of the earth, and *all* will be taken from us. The measured charity of the state, scant as it has been and is, will soon be released from the calls of these whitehaired veterans for their little quarterly allowances. Thousands of

PATRIOTISM

the generation now living must ere they die, hear of the earth filling, and the sod closing, over the *last* of that sacred army.

January 20, 1847

'TIS MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS SINCE!

ON this day, sixty-four years ago—20th January 1783—the government of Great Britain acknowledged the independence of the “Colonies” now composing the United States! At that time George Clinton was Governor of the State of New York, and Thomas Mifflin (of Pennsylvania) President of Congress. The country was laboring not only under the pecuniary liabilities of long war—as just a war as ever patriots waged on earth—but had the general idleness, lassitude, dissipation, hatred to all the usual avocations of business, and the long trains of evils, which the military profession engenders among the people, to overcome. But that they *have* been overcome—by the blessing of God, and a long course of *peace*—we only need the evidence of the present to prove.

WALT WHITMAN

December 18, 1846

[THE PASSING OF REVOLUTIONARY VETERANS]

IT was only two or three days ago that we chronicled the decease of a Revolutionary patriot. Since then, we have learned that another of those true good men—whose living hearts were Freedom's shields in the days of her dark struggles—has quit the toil of mortality, and gone to his home. Alas! the passing upward of these old patriots always makes us sad—for while they are with us, the scenes of the Liberty-birth are to our mind as vivid as the light; and often, as we have looked upon the revered features of some of the Revolution's sons, and seen the fiery glow which illumined face and eye, as he spoke of the men and scenes of the sacred days, and dwelt upon the cherished name and fame of the matchless WASHINGTON—often, with our whole heart, have we thanked God that we were vouchsafed this communion with these men—the instruments wherewith He builded up this freest nation of the earth. But the time is hard by when all these bold ones will have

PATRIOTISM

passed away, and the only mementos left to Americans of their Freedom's battle-days, will be History and our blessed Institutions.

January 8, 1847

The Brooklyn *Eagle* has flaunted out its flag "the tallest kind" to-day, in honor of *that* victory. [Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans, January 8, 1815.] Also, it vocalized Jackson's march in the morning, cried "Hurrah for Hickory!" at the breakfast table, and went up on the top of its "building" at noon, to see as well as hear the thirty-gun salute from the Battery over the river. While it waited there, the wind whistled right sharply athwart its nose—but it cogitated that bullets just thirty-two years ago, whistled much sharper nigh One whose spirit now rests in Heaven!

March 20, 1847

The opening of the *thirtieth* Congress will witness a representation from *thirty* States. How many will we send to the *fortieth*?

Part II

HUMANITY

HANGING, PRISON REFORM, UNFORTUNATES

March 23, 1846

HURRAH FOR HANGING!

WE are going to say some bold truths! We are going to dash at once into the impassioned errors of probably four out of every five who will read this article!

—If ever the present system of criminal law, and the treatment of criminals, offered an instance of one of its fruits, that instance is the precocious monster *Freeman*, the butcher of five human beings last week in Cayuga County in this state—as we have already published the dark and dreadful narrative. Reader! you may meet such a remark as the foregoing, with a scowl, or an impatient jibe—but if we are not, in our own mind, clear in its truth, may we never get sight of Heaven hereafter.

The present excited state of public feeling will, of course, lead the representatives of society in due time to paddle in *his* blood, as

WALT WHITMAN

he in that of his victims.—The murder will surely be *revenged*. We can therefore do no harm by seizing the occasion to draw as profitable a lesson as we may from the whole case. It is no inviting task; but few tasks are inviting.

—Let us examine somewhat of the murderer's life:

So far as anything can be gathered from the facts brought to light, Freeman seems to be an uneducated, friendless outcast. He has never had the benefit of any kind of teaching or counsel; and never lived within any fixed moral or religious influences. His whole character is of the most blindly brutal cast—a mere human animal. At the early age of nineteen, he is accused of a crime of which he says he is not guilty, and through the influence of Mr. Van Ness, is sent to the State Prison for five years! Now consider how few of better fortune, even of virtuous and religious character, would not deeply feel the wrong and injustice of such proceedings, and be roused to the fiercest hate against those who had been instrumental in bringing them to it. How much

HANGING

more terrible the effect then on this neglected, ignorant and depraved negro, in whom the brute had been allowed to rule the man.

For five long and weary years he is shut up in prison, and left to brood over his wrongs. He can make no distinction between the inevitable mistakes of the law and human testimony, and what he imagines is a determination to crush him. He thinks only of his laborious imprisonment day after day, month after month, till it has taken possession of all his thoughts; and the purpose of revenge, which to him is justice, has become to him the very breath of life. If society had dealt tenderly with him during this awful period; if some ministering angel had come and heard his sorrowful story, and sought to bring him under kindly influences, and taught him the beautiful Christian law, "Love your enemies; bless those who curse you;" if this had been done, he might have been saved, and his victims been still in the midst of the living.

But this was not done. The neglected wretch was left to his fate, left to be haunted by his foul passions, and at last to be turned

WALT WHITMAN

out to do their own bidding without a word of warning, or one friend to guide or bless. Is it a matter of wonder then, that the result is what we have seen? Is it strange that the wild beast prevailed?

That the wretch had worked himself into a terribly calm and blind ferocity, appears from the whole account of the murder. The idea of revenge seems to have swallowed up all things else. He seems to have become perfectly bewildered and blinded by his purpose of blood. He not only strikes the object of his spite, the man who did him the supposed wrong, but indiscriminately, as though running the bloody muck. With a frightful coolness, he plunges his knife into all whom he meets, sacrificing guilty and innocent alike. He destroys those who never did him harm, whom he never saw, and against whom he could have had no possible hatred or ill feeling! This very horror of the butchery, shows how thoroughly diseased and confused the whole moral being of the murderer had become.

—What remains then? *Hang him!* In the work of death, let the law keep up with the

HANGING

murderer, and see who will get the victory at last. Homicides are increasing in every part of the land. We are amazed that the gallows don't stop 'em! Let its advocates not be backward, however. Let them stick it out staunchly, and kill and slay the faster—and, even if the more they hang the more they prepare to hang, let them keep it up still—for *is not such the command of God?*

September 9, 1846

ORTHODOX BUT SANGUINARY

THE last Rochester *Advertiser* contains an article on the other day's difficulty at Auburn in reference to Wyatt's body, after he was hung. The *Advertiser* says of the throttled convict (and much more in the same strain) that:

His body should have been buried like the carcass of a dog, far away from the honored dead, to rest in peaceful security, forgotten and unknown. The excitement and ill-feeling over an abandoned wretch would then have been avoided, and the community in which the deed had been committed, remained peaceful and quiet.

WALT WHITMAN

—It is orthodox enough to talk of the ferocity of the murderer, the black passion of criminals, and the malignant impulses of those who steal and stab. We all set down as a matter of course, that every body who is *in* prison is much wickeder in his heart than those who are *out* of prison. And yet it would be hard to find, we trow, a bloodthirstier sentiment than that which could pursue the lifeless clay of a wicked but fellow creature, with such deadly scorn and hatred as is involved in the above extract toward the remains of the murderer, Wyatt! We say this not in anger, but in the profoundest sorrow. It is painful to know that intelligent and respectable men, living in the full light of the precepts and example of Christ, think it meet to promulgate such sentiments. . . . There is little doubt but that Wyatt was a most abandoned young man. Humanity weeps at the recital of his numerous and gloomy crimes. But truth pauses to contemplate his nature—his furious physical passions, his early ignorance, depraved companionship, want of pure example, and the fatal fostering of the first seeds of sin

HANGING

in his breast till the roots became knit in his very life.—Now, too, the laws have had vengeance, (for that's the word,)—the man was duly choked to death.—Is not that enough? Will they pursue their bloody purpose so long as any vestige of his mortality remains? Will they bury his body, “like the carcass of a dog?” Ah, it is such a spirit as could ask for that, which encourages the commission of crime.—We do not mean to say that the writers of such wishes, or of bitter articles against convicts, *wish* to encourage crime; but they *do* nevertheless.

—It is very likely that notions of the kind we are now giving utterance to, will be scouted by not a few as puerile—as the fruit of “mawkish sympathy.” This is the stale cant of the day. It is considered a very manly thing to press with ferocity every advantage which the arrayed potency of the law can give against one frail, quivering wretch—(it *is* somewhat new, however, to carry that ferocity out upon the dead earth of his body!)—but your conservator, of “justice,” feels it horrible and blasphemous, and dangerous to the land, to utter one

WALT WHITMAN

word of sympathy and pity for him whom society has thrust out from it. Pah!

March 24, 1846

OUR ANSWER TO A REASONABLE QUESTION

A correspondent inquires whether we do not acknowledge a connection between the anti-hanging movement and the late increase, in many parts of the country, of the most appalling crimes. He submits that several of the worst murders within the past year, are attributable to the confidence felt by vicious men that they could not be convicted, because there is an aversion to severe punishment very generally spread now among the community, and growing stronger and stronger every day.

It may be that there is reason in our correspondent's inquiry. Nay, we are willing to acknowledge that there is—that whenever those whose wicked and unrestrained passions behold their fellow bad come out from trials scot free, they are in some way encouraged to go and sin again. *But whose fault is this?*

HANGING

For our own part, one of the principal arguments against the gallows is, that while it stands, murderers are so often allowed to escape with impunity—because juries will not convict, where the penalty is death, unless the cases are very aggravated indeed. Many of the worst doers of wickedness are thus thrown back upon society, again to commit crime, and again to be brought before the tribunals,—every successive plunge in the tide of iniquity making their conscience harder and more calloused, until at last they outrage all forbearance and meet the extremest severity of law.

The great ground of complaint from those who advocate hanging—the difficulty of conviction, and the aversion of juries, either to sit on murder trials or to bring in verdicts of guilty—will remain as long as the present laws remain. Admit everything that our correspondent avers, what remedy is there except substituting imprisonment for life in the place of hanging? Vague aspersions on the people, their weakness, credulity, and so forth, will do no good. We must of course take them as

they are, and achieve the best we can, under the circumstances.

—One thing else: We could never understand why the friends of the gallows take it for granted that *sure* perpetual imprisonment is a much milder penalty than death. How can they think so? Is it not enough that a fellow being—for a murderer, however black his crimes, *is* our fellow being—should be dragged away from the presence and communion of his kind, condemned to painful servile labor, dressed in the badges of degradation, his mouth deprived of its loved office of speech, his ears never more to hear the accents of kindness, respect or approbation—kept from the blessed sunshine or free air—and when night comes, to be shut in *alone* with darkness and silence and the phantoms of his past crimes for his only companion? And to be confined thus *for life!*—the slow leaden years rolling onward, and still the same terrible monotony! Good God! we are almost shocked at our own cruelty when we argue for such a punishment to any man! Looking only at the criminal in connection with the

HANGING

great outrage through which we know him, we forget that he is still a duplicate of the humanity that stays in us all. He may be seared in vice, but if we could stand invisible by him in prison and look into his soul, how often during those terrible nights might we not see agony compared to which the pains of the slain are but a passing sigh!

June 24, 1846

HURRAH FOR CHOKING HUMAN LIVES!

THE Convention at Albany—amid the many subjects claiming audience of them—will, in due time, debate the right and wrong of the present popular (?) system of legal strangulation. We may expect, then, to see a noble advocacy of reform in this particular; for there are men here who champion that reform, as they hope for God's love!

Trembling for this "conservative institution" of old times, the advocates of choking the wicked to death, bestir themselves of late, and print articles in their newspapers and magazines, to prove how good it is to strangle

—and how grateful the practice to Him who made man in His own image. Monstrous! As if the Holy God, who they say, wills that there be no more brute sacrifices, can smile upon manglings and bloody offerings up of the greatest masterpiece, the best-beloved of His works!

One of our strangling arguers makes merry at the difficulty, (as he calls it) his opponents have in reconciling their doctrine to certain “first principles”—Poor alphabet-learner! Knows he not that writers of the simplest and soundest truths have frequently found it repugnant to descend and prove what is as plain to clear-eyed men as any fact in mathematics—but which obstinate and bigoted people, and reverencers of the example of the past, cannot or will not see? Thus, to a person of large mind, principles are regarded in their application to the widest humanity, in their fitness to the unchanging nature of the heart, and the motives of its action—and not through an artificial medium, tinged by fashion, temporary possession, precedent, and the monotony of things around us.

HANGING

January 21, 1847

THE LAW OF BLOOD.—SHALL RUSS BE HUNG?

A wide and powerful move is on the start, to induce the Governor to commute the sentence of Russ, lately convicted of murder, into imprisonment for life. (During the trial of Russ, the prisoner actually slept all through the most important testimony against him. This proves either that he is insane, or callous beyond ordinary experience.) And the probabilities are not unfavorable to the success of this move. The aversion of a very large and intelligent portion of society to the law of blood grows stronger every day! it increases with the increase of the Christian spirit, and with the prevalence of true views on the subject of crime and its punishments! it will never cease knocking on the hard flinty heart of the law, till it has penetrated its iron surface, and broken down its conservative cruelty! May good angels speed the progress of this benignant influence!

This day, 21st, is the very day French Louis was guillotined fifty-four years ago in Paris. At that era of bloodshed—when a nation's accum-

WALT WHITMAN

ulated wrongs and wrath burst over the tyrants of France in one wild whirlwind whose fury, even wild as it was, did not half equal the horror of the long train of *quiet* outrage and wretchedness which millions had previously endured—at that era of terror, and after it, the influence of public executions so spread through the empire, that private murders increased a hundred fold, and a traveller relates, as a common occurrence, the sight of boys and girls guillotining frogs, cats, and so on, for their amusement! The reflective reader will not fail to see the spirit of the hanging law in that era, in one of its wildest and most fearful developments. It is by a magnifying glass that we best look, not only at distant objects, but at the principles of morals—if we wish to get their minute proportions, and gauge the bearings of them.

June 30, 1847

THE "LAW OF BLOOD"

Mr. Brooklyn Eagle:

I noticed in your paper yesterday an article somewhat in the same strain with other preceding numbers, arguing against what people of your belief are fond of

PRISON REFORM

calling the "law of blood." Now, as long as you confine yourselves to *arguments*, (however sophistical) it may be well enough. But it seems to me these fancy sketches, like that in yesterday's *Eagle*, of a *boy* being hung, are not legitimate means of discussing the question. It is easy to affect people's sympathies; and that, with a little dash of sentimentality, may move the weak, but can hardly convince a

FULL GROWN MAN.

Instead of being a "fancy sketch," our anecdote of yesterday had its counterpart in very many *real* instances. To go no further back than the 5th of the current month, on that day a young boy of only sixteen or seventeen years old, named William H. Stepter, was hung in Greenupsburgh, Kentucky, for the murder of his mother! Nearly five thousand persons assembled to witness the closing scene. The act for which he has suffered was committed some weeks since, as every one supposed, by the boy's father.—The father was arrested, and would unquestionably have been hanged, if his son, *to whom no suspicion whatever attached had not voluntarily come forward and released his father by declaring that he alone was the guilty person!* The son was accordingly

convicted on his own confession. He had always previously borne the character of an inoffensive boy. He was of a very weak mind—occasionally insane, it is said. . . . Now, if the reader will just turn to our “fancy sketch” of yesterday, he will see whether *this* does not excel it, in every point of horror, repulsiveness, and monstrous cruelty. . . . Then there was the case of the boy Denny, last year in Putnam County, in this State; not a case of such extreme youth (if we remember rightly he was eighteen years old,) but one where the felon punished was yet, in view of all law except murder law, a child, with all his guilt.

There are certain people who scout at everything that appeals to the feeling, as “sentimentality,” a foolish weakness, only fit for women and children. So appears to think our “full grown man.” But truly, nearly all that is good and pure in the world—in law, government, human action, and other departments of life—proceeds from the impulses of this “sentimentality.” The *opposite* of it—the coarse, vulgar shallowness which cannot ap-

PRISON REFORM

preciate it—*that* is ridiculous. But as long as the divine emanation of Christ's purity and gentleness lives—as long as His example and law live—so long has such "sentimentality" the most illustrious precedent possible for human thoughts and deeds!

It has been said to us by worldly prudent men that the side against capital punishment is not the popular side. Doubtless it *was* not the popular side once; but of late years the glaring truth is nigh every man's knowledge that frequently in the empanelling of juries in murder cases, four-fifths of the jurors called have sworn in solemn asservations, that they had conscientious scruples against hanging! We should like to know what this proves.

August 26, 1847

WHAT THE DEFENDERS OF THE GALLOWES SAY AND AN ANSWER THERETO

THE *New York Journal of Commerce* of this morning commences an article embodying its argument why, even if the current story of "the wrong man hung," (Boyington, at Mo-

bile,) be all true, it doesn't prove enough against capital punishment to warrant the abolition of that penalty. But before it gets through, it receives information through a "gentleman from Mobile," which leads it to doubt the story of the Boyington mistake. Whether that be a mistake or not, however, we suppose the *Journal* will acknowledge that there have been, and must always continue to be, many a "wrong man," and woman too, hung for crimes they never committed. We have seen some estimate of the number somewhere, based on careful investigations, and mostly giving name, date, and place, of these horrible cases: we think, in the different parts of Europe and this Republic, since the commencement of the present century, the number was near *a hundred and fifty guiltless persons* who had been victims to the scaffold, under the present laws! This is most appalling!

In connection with this part of the argument, the advocates of imprisonment demand instead of the old the other mode of penalty, not because it can be altogether erased, when

PRISON REFORM

once inflicted by mistake and on innocent parties—but because, on the discovery of such mistake, society *can* make some recompense. In case the innocent party be hung, *it cannot*: the *Journal's* logic, therefore, falls down. And there is no doubt that when the “wrong man” is imprisoned, the *right* man will in most cases have such continual prickings of the soul as may lead to the exposure of the crime; for great crimes have a sort of cumulative remorse, that is ever goaded by itself when kept alive through such a thing as the knowledge of another party still suffering for the deed.

But we do not ask for the abolition of the choking law, simply because the “wrong man” is sometimes choked to death. That is but a little item in the great chain of reasoning which makes up the whole sum. We ask it because an immense amount of crime goes unpunished—an amount increasing from year to year—because juries under the present dread of the scaffold, *will not agree to convict*, with the blood of the criminal on their skirts. Thus we ask it in defence of society, and of

WALT WHITMAN

the laws, and of common justice, and of our private safety. We ask that the monstrous influence of criminal executions be foregone, with all the poison that they diffuse through the moral tone of communities where they happen—inviting bloodshed by the taste of blood. And this cannot be avoided by merely enacting executions to be private. They *never can* be private, as long as they exist at all. We ask it out of a decent respect to that potential public opinion, which we are all bound to obey; *for the gallows is now in the minority*. We ask it in the name of Christ. We ask it on the strength of the greatest judges', statesmen's, and lawyers' opinions in its favor. We ask it with the tongue of all philanthropy, which is the truest wisdom. . . . On what foundation can the *Journal of Commerce* say nay to these?

November 10, 1847

A WOMAN HUNG

OVER the northern telegraph we get an account of the execution, by hanging, of Mary

UNFORTUNATES

Runkle, yesterday, November 9th. What a spectacle! A *female*, even one who had committed the highest crime known to the statute book, deliberately and slowly taken out, under the authority of the law, *to punish killing*, and the life choked from her gasping throat!

August 1, 1846

THE POOR WRETCHES

YES; poor wretches, indeed, are the inmates of our "civilized" jails! for, with all our boasted improvement on the past, we have *not* much bettered the condition or reformatory influence of our places for criminals. By a late document emanating from the New York Prison Association, and describing the condition of the "Tombs" there, it is stated, (and we would call particular attention to the whole of the record) that the average number of males in confinement awaiting trial, under sentence, and for examination, in the prison, is 127, and of females, 47; the number swelling on some days to 250; and that the total commitments for last year were over 10,000, of

which more than 600 were boys and girls.—The amount of religious teachings given to the males on the Sabbath, is almost literally nothing.—Occasionally they are there addressed by philanthropic individuals; but these efforts are very rare, and no reliance can or ought to be placed on them. The females are somewhat better supplied; owing to the self-denying and persevering efforts of a small number of Christian women.

The same document also informs us that the Sabbath employment of the male prisoners is the perusal of licentious publications, smoking, etc., whilst the ribald jest and heaven-daring profanity takes the place of the more appropriate acts of prayer and praise. In sad truth, the City Prison is to multitudes but the gates of perdition. Here are to be found the hardened and reckless criminal; the polluted and polluting woman; the ragged idler; the bloated and delirious drunkard; and the artful and scheming villain. Into such society as this, are indiscriminately thrown poor but innocent witnesses, whose very souls revolt at these degrading associa-

UNFORTUNATES

tions; young boys and girls detected in their first petty offences against the laws of society; children of tender years, guilty of no crime but those of poverty and the loss of parents, awaiting their passage to the City Foundling Institute on Long Island; the poor and afflicted on their way to the Alms House; the blighted mind bound for the Asylum of Lunacy; and finally, the honest emigrant, who, having braved the perils of the sea for a home of liberty and plenty, is transferred from the confinement of the ship to incarceration in a den of felons and prostitutes, thus saving, by the loss of his character and self-respect, and the immolation of his bright hopes, a few paltry shillings to his importer.

With the preparers of that document, we too say, our wonder ceases at the increase of crime, and the unblushing exhibitions of vice in our cities, when we see public institutions, which should exert a renovating moral influence on their culpable or unfortunate inmates, thus converted into instruments of gross depavation. For this state of things there can be no justification; for the remedy is in the

WALT WHITMAN

hands of the constituted authorities. The claims of a common humanity, the well-being of our own endeared family circle, and honorable regard to the fair fame of the city, and the impulses of a larger patriotism,—all start up arguments strong and numberless, for the immediate action of those having the power to eradicate these festering evils.

December 27, 1847

VAGROM WOMAN

ANN McDonough had occasion to bless her lucky stars on Christmas for being sent for sixty days to the county jail for vagrancy. This will just about carry her comfortably through the cold weather. Happy Ann!

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

[WHITMAN's interest in education and his ideas on the subject doubtless sprang from his previous experiences as a teacher at Woodbury, L. I., and at other places in Suffolk and Queens Counties, L. I., before he went to New York to work as a writer. Those experiences were so recent that his chief journalistic adversary, the Brooklyn *Advertiser*, frequently taunted him with being a "school master." For a description of Whitman as a school teacher by former pupils see Leon Bazalgette's "Walt Whitman the Man and His Work."]

March 4, 1847

AN HOUR IN ONE OF THE BROOKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SOMETHING MORE ABOUT EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

WE spent the greater part of Tuesday morning (2nd) in Public School No. 4, Clason Ave. near Flushing Ave. The building is not like

our down-town school-houses: it is not near as convenient and durable, being built of wood, and somewhat shabby at that. We would take advantage of the occasion to suggest to the school officers of the 4th district and to the Board of Education, the fine opportunity they have of purchasing cheaply *now* in East Brooklyn two or three ample sites for school-houses, for the future. Any body can see that in a very few years that thriving section of our city is to be to the rest somewhat as the valley of the Mississippi is to the other part of the Union. Children already abound there, and it is quite shocking that the places of their education should be cramped into a small compass, with mean play-grounds, and stifled closeness. And those evils can be so easily precluded. Fifteen hundred dollars will buy six lots in many of those streets; and such a surface would afford quite a handsome site for a seminary which would, in a few years, be filled with the people's children to overflowing. . . . The little people of No. 4 were all busily at work—some at one thing, some at another. We were quite pleased at the

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

absence of the frozenness of restraint—that irksome and unnecessary discipline—which pervades some schools. They were at work studying and reciting industriously, but (as young people best perform those offices) like creatures of volition, and not like iron machinery. We saw many very fair specimens of writing—some good pencil sketches, in the way of drawing—and listened to exercises in grammar, arithmetic, and geography. In the first branch, we are free to say, we never saw the pupils in any public school who seemed so thoroughly to understand the *principles* of that study. They delved out the hidden grammatical position of words, that might have puzzled wiser heads—analyzed the parts of sentences, and, by comparison, soon got at the right of some pretty close questions. In arithmetic, too, the boys, (our time did not permit us to pay more than a passing look in the girls' school, and the primary,) showed that *things* were among them of more importance than mere *signs*—that the artificial of learning did not there carry the day, over the real. Among many bright boys, (they were

all bright, and it's hardly fair perhaps to select out only a few, after all,) were Wm. Husted, T. H. Taylor, and two brothers named Van Voorhis. The classes ran over some other of their studies—and, upon the whole, made a marked impression of a favorable kind on us. We think this school an unanswerable argument in favor of treating youth at school as rational creatures—treating them gently, and instructing them in such a way that they *understand*, and *not* merely get by rote.—The whipping system should be entirely abolished in every school; and it is a scandal on the judgment and efficiency of any teacher who practices it, and any school officer who allows it. The absurd old way of teachers holding themselves aloof from their pupils, and punishing them for errors of mere manner, is exploded; and the day has come when instructors of the ancient kind must either yield to the better light, or fade before it. . . . In accordance with our custom, in narrating visits to our Brooklyn schools, we shall improve the chance to jot down a few hints on the matter of education and teachers—which matter



EDUCATION, CHILDREN

really involves the weightiest issues to every man, woman, and child, everywhere. For what can be of higher consequence to a human being than his own mind, his temper, and his knowledge? The mere ordinary objects of wealth, politics, and so on, are comparatively insignificant to them.

Education, then, is a great subject. Its necessity and value require to be raised in the estimation of men. It is enough spoken about, but it needs to be more felt and acted upon. Mighty things depend upon the young of the age. Each little child has an immortal soul. He has the treasure house of the human mind; and it depends upon those who ought to see to his education, whether the costly and precious beauties of that treasure house shall be locked up for ever; or brought forth to gladden the eyes of men, and prove a perpetual spring of delight to their now unconscious possessor. Fully to bring out these boundless capacities require hard and laborious attention. Nothing will do but the sleepless eye and the ever guarding hand. Why what mighty energies lie slumbering at this moment in the brains of

the school-children of Brooklyn!—destined in many of them to slumber for ever, for the want of being brought forth to the day! energies, equal without doubt, to the performance of great deeds—to the gaining of deathless fame and glory; or what is better still, of benefiting the condition of mankind. What wondrous things might be done were a complete education, in the comprehensive sense of the term, given to those children. Possibly at some future time, the balance of a nation's happiness might be made to rise or fall by one of their hands. Who can look down into the dark vista of the future, and say what bright path shall not be marked out for some of them? Like as arrows in the hands of the giant, says the Bible, even so are young children: happy is he who hath his quiver full of them.

The first requirement for those who have charge of the young, appears to be that their physical well-being, their health and comfort be attended to. The next undoubtedly is with regard to their moral nature. This is an all-important part. In youth are laid the

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

foundations of the character far deeper and far more firmly than we generally imagine. That is the time to make them good and honest, and lovers of truth. The mind is then a new ground—a virgin soil. Whatever seeds are dropt there, they will take root and grow up as the child grows up, and bear either the bitter and poisonous or the sweet and grateful fruit. And the virtues should be planted then deeply and carefully. Honesty and strict adherence to truth, those mighty anchors of true religion, in that early season of life should be carefully inwoven with the very fibres of the heart. No anxiety can be too great, and no labor too severe, or care too incessant, if they can but effect this purpose. Day and night it should be the great aim. Every occasion should be seized, and every interruption jealously watched, that can influence this important matter. To plant in the heart of a child this purity, this love of truth, and this beautiful innocence from all evil intentions, ought to be a parent's fondest wish and strongest effort. And when the harvest comes, how richly will he be repaid. To know that honest

and upright dispositions are as natural to his child as are the beatings of his heart, will repay him back a thousand fold for all his toil and all his anxiety. And let no one suppose that it is so difficult a task to make the mind of a child moral and virtuous. It is this wicked world—it is the corruption which accumulates in the habits and thoughts of society—that make the young, as they grow up become more and more deficient in virtue. But it is no impossible task, with proper management, to make a sincere and truth-loving child. Their brains will receive and nourish good propensities as well, if not easier than bad ones. . . . He or she is a foolish parent who thinks that care and labor for a child can be spent in any more desirable way than in making it the possessor of a heart wherein dwell integrity and pure thoughts, and hatred of all kinds of falsehood, and meanness and dishonesty. Desirable as we consider learning to be, we consider an honest soul to be far, far more desirable. Learning is the key which unlocks to us the minds of the wise, and the beauties of creation, and the lofty pleasures of

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

intellect. But a pure soul is the key that unlocks the very gates of paradise: and therefore it is the very perfection of wisdom to confer on the young that which is most precious. And there is this difference: that while the branches of learning are easiest of access to the children of the opulent, who can best afford the time and expense, the indigent man can train up *his* children to have honest minds and character, as cheaply and as easily as the richest in the land. And the poorest man on earth, with an upright heart, and unblemished reputation, stands forth, yes towers up like a pillar of beauty, by the side of the richest and proudest, whose minds conscious of wrongs done, and consciences seared, and bad desires given way to, shrink to littleness before his.

It is very common to hear people say that education is a great thing. We question though whether one in a hundred of those who talk this way ever act out the undoubted truism which is in their mouths. Very few persons are so stupid as not to acknowledge that it is desirable to have learning.—But are

such men willing to take proper pains and trouble to procure this important requisite for their children, or those under their charge? Do they find out about the teacher who is to superintend their children's education? Do they visit the school? Do they carefully examine from time to time whether a reasonable progress is made? It is true, to do so would be troublesome: it might cost them a few hours every month, and would require some little exercise of the judgment; and so it is generally left undone. Now if it were a question where the loss or gain of dollars was concerned, would these same individuals be thus inattentive? But, says some one, I pay for my children's schooling and I send them to school; is not that enough? No: it is not enough. In such an important matter as the education of the young, each parent should see for himself, and not trust to chance. He should have frequent conferences with the teacher, arranging what studies ought to be pursued, and the management of the children, and the procuring of proper books and other appliances for learning. It should be his

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

business to see that the person who conducts the school is a competent person, having in himself no deficiencies or characteristics that unfit him for the station. He should also be careful that every reasonable facility be given to forward his children in their studies, and to increase their confidence and respect for their teacher. . . . We do not hesitate to say, too, that it depends as much upon the parent at home, as upon the teacher at school, whether the child learns even at school. The parent and teacher should work together with the same object at heart. It is a sure death-blow to a teacher's influence over any child, when that child is taught at home to find fault with or think contemptuously of his teacher. —For the great lever in education at school is the confidence of a child in his master. This is a mighty power. With it an intelligent teacher can do wonders. But when a parent is unwise enough to let his child be impressed with the idea that his master is blamable and wrong, that he is a person set up for the purpose of wearing out whips upon boys' backs, or is a tyrant, and does not deserve to be

WALT WHITMAN

respected by his pupils, then the charm is broken; then the best influence of the teacher over the child, the influence of love, is gone; and for all the good he gets, the youthful learner may as well be kept at home.

A great deal depends too upon making a school pleasant. Any teacher who loses sight of this, commits a great error. Who has not heard that such or such a one has learned some particular accomplishment or trade with very remarkable quickness and perfection, because he "took a fancy to it," and was pleased with it? Has it never entered into the thoughts of those who send to school that it is possible for their children to take a fancy for, and be pleased with, their school, and to improve in their studies there with much more rapidity in consequence? It is evidently then a great object gained when the school is loved and sought, not hated and shunned; and those persons make a capital mistake, if they would but be aware of it, who let their young people be sent to the school room, impressed with the idea that it is a prison, or a dreary and

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

tiresome place. With regard to this last point, we are clear of the good of singing exercises in schools. A more innocent amusement, and one practised with better results, both as regards its beneficial aid to other studies and its giving a gentle tone to the passions and tempers of children, there is not.

December 17, 1846

A FEW WORDS TO THE YOUNG MEN OF BROOKLYN

IT deserves to be remembered that education is not a thing for schools, or children merely. The acquirement of knowledge concerns those who are grown, or nearly grown, more even than children. Let no one suppose that when a person becomes eighteen or twenty or thirty years old, he is past the season for learning. Some of the wisest and most celebrated men, whose names adorn the pages of history, educated themselves after they had lost the season of youth. They began, many of them, without even a knowledge of reading

and writing, and raised themselves by their industry and study to high eminences. The biographies of men of science present accounts of people born and nurtured amid the deepest poverty and toil, with hardly money enough to buy a sheet of paper or the commonest book—who yet, by a resolute application and improving of odd hours, acquired learning far beyond others who were living in comfort and enjoying all the advantages of schools. . . . No period is too late to attend to the improvement of the mind. No station has cares so numerous, or disadvantages so great, but that the one who fills it may cultivate his intellect. There have been young men—young men whose lot it was to labor hard, and to possess but few aids in acquiring what they sought—and thesesame persons, thirsting for knowledge, and feeling how noble a thing it is to raise oneself above the level of ignorance, and equality with the low and debased, resolutely set themselves to work in studying—and attained distinction and fame in that sphere. And more than this: not only have poverty and suffering and weakness been overcome by those bent on

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

advancing, but even blindness and deafness, which seem to present insurmountable obstacles, have not been able to stop the exertions of the knowledge-seeking spirit. Some of the greatest scholars have labored under these afflictions, and have surmounted them.

. . . To those who are just entering upon manhood, the paths of science present pleasures of the most alluring kind. If the young men of Brooklyn, instead of spending so many hours, idling in bar-rooms, and places of vapid, irrational un-amusement, were to occupy that time in improving themselves in knowledge, happy would it be for them, and the city too! If, instead of engaging in scenes, associating with companions, and haunting places that lead them to become fond of gambling, that meanest and most debasing of vices—of intemperance, that dreadful canker that cuts off the fairest flowers and the finest fruits in the human garden, they would but covet the far higher and the far purer pleasures of literature, half the misery and guilt that generally afflict men would be precluded them.

WALT WHITMAN

February 4, 1847

FREE SEMINARIES OF BROOKLYN

AMONG the matters of unfailing interest to us, which we often think of, investigate, and allude to, are the *public schools*—the seminaries where the future masses of our Republic are being formed! There, in them, are the collected voters, the life-blood of the land. There are our American young. . . . The young! what a comprehensive phrase! A thousand, busy, restless little brains—a thousand characters to fashion—a thousand immortal souls! There, engaged in their puerile ambitions, their childish aims, appear they—with their clear eyes, their tangled hair, their unbuttoned jackets, and their engaging ingenuousness! Look now on these awkward ones—with their loutish bend, their unpolished way, and their ignorance. You think there is no poetry in *them*! Alas! it is not the fault of nature, the bountiful one: *she* has filled the house with every thing noble and beautiful—with golden statues, and paintings, and well-tuned instruments of music. But the windows

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

have not been thrown open, and all lies hushed and dark. It is a hard thing—the practice of many teachers, parents, and those who have to do with children—that they are pleasant only to the pretty ones—to them that have had the good luck to get only the agreeable traits drawn out.

There are in Brooklyn thirteen public school establishments—each with its various departments, male and female, primary, and so on. Some public school buildings have in the neighborhood of a thousand pupils, including all the departments. In the primaries, in the basements, may be observed by the visitor “any quantity” of little red-cheeked humanity, a sight to make the hardest man’s heart grow soft and gentle within him. The greatest fault with these departments (and a great fault with all school rooms,) is insufficient ventilation. Every school room should possess a very high ceiling, and valves or some other contrivance for purifying the air. On the second floors, may be found the schools for girls. These will generally strike one immediately for their superior neatness, and the

clean appearance of every thing, from the very floors, up.—The boys' schools occupy the third and last floors.

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As a general thing the faults of our public schools system are—crowding too many students together, insufficiency of books, and their cost being taxed directly on the pupil—and the flogging system, which in a portion of the schools still holds its wretched sway. With pride we unite in the numerous commendations of the grand free school system of this State—with its twelve thousand seminaries, and its twenty thousand teachers, to whom each child, rich or poor, can come without money and without price! But we are none the less aware that the prodigious sum—hundreds of thousands of dollars—annually expended on these schools, might be expended to more profit. We have by no means ascended to the height of the great argument of education. The monotonous *old* still resists the fresh philosophical *new*. Form and precedent often are more thought of than reality.

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

What are mere “order” or “learning lessons,” or all the routine of the simple *outside* of school-keeping?—Absolutely nothing, in themselves; and only valuable, as far as they help the higher objects of educating the child. To teach the child *book grammar* is nothing; to teach him by example, by practice, by thoroughly clarifying the principles of correct syntax, *how to talk and write harmoniously*, is every thing. To put him through the arithmetic is not much; to make him able to compare, calculate, and quickly seize the bearings of a practical figure-question such as occurs in business every hour, is a good deal. Mere atlas geography is a sham, too, unless the learner have the position of places in his mind, and *know* the direction, distances, bearings, etc., of the countries, seas, cities, rivers and mountains, whose names (as our miserable school geographies give them,) he runs over so glibly. We care very little indeed for—what is the pride of many teachers’ hearts—the military discipline of their schools, and the slavish obedience of their pupils to the imperial nod or waved hand of the master. As

to the flogging plan, it is the most wretched item yet left of the ignorance and inefficiency of school-keeping. It has surrounded the office, (properly one of the noblest on earth,) with a character of contemptibleness and petty malignance, that will stick to it as long as whipping sticks among teachers' habits. What nobleness can reside in a man who catches boys by the collar and cuffs their ears? What elevation or dignity of character can even a child's elastic thoughts connect with one who cuts him over the back with a ratan or makes him hold out his hand to receive the whack of a ferule? For teachers' own sakes—for the true height and majesty of their office, hardly second to the priesthood—they should one and all unite in precluding this petty and foolish punishment—this degrader and bringerdown of their high standing. As things are, the word school-teacher is identified with a dozen unpleasant and ridiculous associations—a sour face, a whip, hard knuckles snapped on tender heads, no gentle, fatherly kindness, no inciting of young ambition in its noble phases, none of the beautifiers

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

of authority, but all that is small, ludicrous, and in after life productive of indignation. We have reason to think that the flogging system still prevails in several of our Brooklyn schools to quite a wretched extent. In the school in Baltic St. under a former management, forty children in the boys' department were thrashed in the course of one morning! and in the female department a little girl was so cut and marked with the ratan over back, neck and shoulders, for some trifling offence, that the livid marks remained there for several days! This is a pretty fact for the character of our public seminaries! Justice to the mass of the teachers, however, demands that they should not be confounded with these ultra and repulsive cases. In general, doubtless, they whip with moderation—if that word may be applied to such a punishment at all. Nor do we mean to impugn their motives altogether. *They* think they are doing right. So did the Spanish torturers in Peru—inquisitors in Spain—and the learned doctors who denounced Jenner.

WALT WHITMAN

September 19, 1846

SCHOOL OFFICERS' DUTIES

THE Board of Education in this county, hold an indirect influence over human honor and happiness which we dare venture to affirm their electors, and perhaps themselves, do not half realize.—Several thousand youth are educated in the Free Seminaries of this county. What calculation can there be of the vastness of the results capable of being brought to bear on these young men and women? What mere estimate of pecuniary profit or loss will apply to the case of thousands of intelligent American intellects? . . . Of the many subjects that might, in this connection, be expatiated on, we shall at present only mention one—the *practice of whipping* in schools. We beg to suggest to the Board of Education an inquiry into the propriety of entirely depriving the teachers of the power of inflicting this sort of punishment. We are aware that precedent and no small number of respectable persons are in favor of the whip in schools—and that its abrogation will be strenuously

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

opposed. When men come to consider, however, that all reforms for the last three hundred years, have invariably had similar precedent and similar opposition against *them* such objections may lose much of their weight. In some of the Public Schools the ferule and ratan are used to an extent really shocking. We *know* this, and give it as no mere gossip.

It would be a great and much needed reform in schools, if the spirit of kindness and a wholesome emulation were more generally diffused—and greater trouble taken to make the place of study—and study itself—agreeable to the young. Now, both are an irksome terror—and as long as the power of cutting and lashing remains, they will continue so. What need is there of goading youth to the performance of that which its own prying and feverishly active nature, if discreetly directed by a teacher worthy the name, will do so much quicker and better and more agreeably? We earnestly call on our school officers to at least make inquiry on this subject of whipping. Let us see if—while in the management and punishment of the wickedest criminals, public sentiment demands

WALT WHITMAN

the abolition of the lash—it must still hold its livid rule over the young—the pliant, affectionate creatures that the Sacred Master of our religion likened to the Kingdom of Heaven itself.

April 17, 1847

FLOGGING IN OUR BROOKLYN SCHOOLS

ALTHOUGH we take decided ground against the wretched government of the rod and ferule, in schools, we are not disposed to condemn—with any violence at least—those moderate teachers who whip only in rare instances and extreme cases, and then under the control of dignified temper, and a manly responsibility. But hardly any words are too emphatic to apply to the teacher—unworthy that noble and honorable name—who has *no other* means of making his pupils obey him, than blows—who turns his school into a place of dread and torment—who thrashes boys for the most trivial oversight, and instead of making them love him for his affection and good will to them, and respect him for his serenity and calmness, induces them to hate him, as their

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

petty tyrant. . . . We call the particular attention of the trustees of the Public School No. 8, in Middagh Street, to an inquiry whether the rod is not used there to an altogether unpardonable extent. If we are rightly informed, the most trifling matter, (such as kicking an old hat in the street,) is made the reason for a whipping. One boy was the other day, even for a less offence, so severely *attacked* by the instructor (?) that the skin of his hand was abraded, the blood stained it, and the ferule was broken! In all our visits to this school, (the boys' department,) except the first one before it was fairly under weigh, we have been impressed with the miserableness of the system pursued there. It is unworthy of this age, and this city. It is incumbent on the proper officers to see that it be remedied; and we hereby call upon them to do so.

April 9, 1846

SOMETHING ABOUT CHILDREN

IN the morning and evening peregrinations about the quiet streets of Brooklyn, (for those

are the ones we do most affect,) we have grown to be on thee and thou terms with a number of fine little children. By name we know them not—nor they us; but we understand one another very well, for all that. Introductions, (which are bores at the best) are of course not needed with children. There is one young rascal in Cranberry Street who insists on calling us always "Uncle Tom,"—though heaven only knows why. Perhaps his ma once had some good-looking brother, yclept Thomas, and the child saw him but a short while—and he resembled—ahem!

Toward sundown of a pleasant day, in the streets adjacent to the Heights, hundreds of these boys and girls come forth to play on the walks in front. It is a refreshing thing to see them. Ah, beautiful creatures! What wonder is there, (as we look in the sinless meaning of your eyes,) that the Beloved of God chose ye to image the Kingdom of Heaven?

Who can be harsh and bitter with children?—And yet far, far too many are so. Their

EDUCATION, CHILDREN

little foibles, the developments of that which, in truth, is the overflowing goodness or spirit of their nature—are often regarded with taunts, with threats, or with blows.

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

January 29, 1847

THE SEWING-WOMEN OF BROOKLYN AND NEW YORK

To say that poverty is one of the greatest causes of crime, would be saying a proverbial truth, literally almost as old as the hills. Upon this truth, however, much may be predicated, which a superficial observer would at first expect to find the causes of elsewhere. How many *poor young women* there are in Brooklyn and New York—made so by the miserably low rate of wages paid for women's work, of all kinds, and in all its various departments, from that of the most accomplished governess to that of the washerwoman! The papers, it is true, sometimes publish stories of the sums made and saved by women in some of the New England or New Jersey factories—how, by preserving industry and economy, they, “lay up” enough in the course of a few years to

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

purchase a lot or two, and have something in the savings bank besides. Though these stories, to be candid, appear to us apocryphal, if they are fully true we cannot see that they prove much. In country towns, lots are frequently sold for from twenty to fifty dollars. It would be hard, too, if *some* girls, out of many hundreds, did not have something like good fortune—if that may be called good fortune which takes away the blood from their cheeks, the lustre from their eyes, and the vigor from their young limbs, making them prematurely old, and giving them a few dollars instead . . . But it is more particularly with the employment and remuneration of working females in this city, that we have now to do. There are hundreds here on whom the curse (a blessing, properly regulated,) of Adam has descended—they have indeed to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. Of late years, the proportion of females among those arraigned before the tribunals of justice for crime, has become alarmingly greater than it used to be. Writers have suggested various reasons for this. One, of some note, in a

monthly periodical, attributes it partly to the masculine doctrines in reference to the political rights of women, that have been broached of late years. Short-sighted philosopher! have you forgotten the very primer of your political economy, wherein it is truly written that poor pay is one of the profuse sources of crime? Go on then, and trace the causes, the agents, the means of that poverty. Pursue the threads of the fearful argument, from their small and ramified beginnings, on through the windings and turnings they take, until they end at last in the black waters of despair and death. "What?" says the reader, "poor pay? Do you think my getting my shirts made so cheaply, or my buying clothes at a low price, has anything to do with female crime?" Even so, worthy gentleman. Think of it for a moment; think how four-fifths of the young working-women are situated. On one side is virtue, but accompanied by stern and gaunt attendants—wearying labor, stinted food, mean dress, and the cool regard of the world. On the other side is vice, but smiling and buxom—offering pleasure, an

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

easy life, comfort, and fine apparel. Is not the temptation great? It is easy to be pure, where you can do so and get along well; but where you have to battle with destitution, an ordinary soul will faint in the contest, and yield up its goodness.

All this talk, however, is of little avail, unless it tends some way to remedy the evil. The only such remedy we know of, is to be found in the operation of an awakened public opinion. If we did not have faith in this, we should not take the trouble to write and publish such articles as these. The press must speak out, often and boldly. It is difficult to say, at present, what particular means must be fixed on to obviate the dangers to which we have alluded; but once open the eyes of men to the *fact* of the intimate connection between *poor pay* for women, and *crime among women*, and the greatest difficulty is overcome. The remedy will somehow or other follow—for benevolence, when aroused among the body of the people, tends to the reform of whatever abuse it is directed against.

WALT WHITMAN

December 4, 1847

SHUTTING OF STORES AT 8 O'CLOCK P.M.— JUNIOR CLERKS

WE are glad to notice, in the dry goods stores of this city, an announcement that said stores will be closed during the coming winter, at 8 o'clock in the evening instead of 9, or half past nine, as has been the case; (Saturday night is an exception—on that evening there is no limit). . . . It would be a good custom, were nearly all the retail stores where clerks are employed, to shut up in time to give those clerks, and owners too, the use of their evenings. Or, if most desirable, the shutting up early might be done on all except two nights of the week—say those of Tuesdays and Saturdays. If this were a *general* arrangement, it would soon coincide entirely with the public convenience, and people would become used to it.

Clerks in stores have many disadvantages, that perhaps more than counterbalance the absence, in their employment, of what we usually call hard labor. They cannot be said

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

to be learning a trade; their wages are generally very small; they are compelled to be less independent than a mechanic; and their time is almost invariably required from 7 o'clock in the morning, till 9 or half-past 9 at night. The junior clerks, or boys in retail stores, (and, indeed, in almost all working places,) have a particularly "hard time." The employer is too apt to treat them as menials, and compel too much labor for too little money. They are expected to be at their "place" first in the morning and last at night. They get the hardest fare, the smallest pay, and the fewest favors. Most of those indulgences and kindnesses so appropriate to youth, are denied them. It is irksome, at any time, for young people to be confined from morning till night in a sedentary way. And this irksomeness, in the case of store boys, is added to by the "boss," (to say nothing of surliness, which can be shown boys without restraint) seldom feeling any anxiety for or interest in them more than to get the most of their labor and time.

It is sometimes suggested that by letting

the clerks of stores have their evenings, they may spend them badly. Similar logic would suggest that by letting a man have the use of his legs he might run off the dock, and get drowned. We cannot approve of the idea of confining young persons in this way, for fear they *may* come to injury.

September 16, 1846

SERVANTS

THE *Tribune* in some well-proffered remarks on servants, in this country—and of the objections among many poor women to becoming servants—says that with far the greater number, the invincible obstacle is the treatment to which servants are usually subjected, and their social position in the world's eye and their own. A young woman (continues the *Tribune*) earns twenty or thirty cents a day by sewing or other piece work, and contrives to exist on it in some garret or dog-hole. Her hours are her own; so long as she can pay, no one has a right to give her an insolent word. But a servant girl—what are

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

her rights? What is her position? Suppose she rises at five and goes directly to her work; at what hour has she a right to consider her day's work done? What sort of accommodations are deemed too poor for her! When and where may she receive a friend? Where is her Sabbath? Mind that we do not say that she receives no *permission* to go out, no indulgence of various kinds; we are speaking of her *rights* as a servant girl, and they are scanty and dubious enough. That servants should quite generally be ignorant and coarse under such a system is inevitable. The master wrong they must endure is that of not being regarded as human beings. "People" and "servants" are two sorts of folks. What a sneer fills the family circle of faces at the idea of Sally, the cook, or Betty, the chambermaid, having a beau! How impossible is it thought that either should be allowed to go out two evenings in succession after working thirteen hours during the day! And while the awful criminality of Sabbath breaking is duly enunciated, where is the family so strict as to excuse her with half a day's work on Sunday?

WALT WHITMAN

In how many families is not Sunday as hard a day for servants as any in the week?

October 30, 1846

CUTTING DOWN THOSE WAGES

WE are credibly informed that out of the one hundred and fifty workmen employed in the White Lead Factories of Brooklyn, the wages of the regular workmen have not been lowered at all, nor is there any probability of such lowerment. It is true, however, that some forty or fifty of the laborers, (whose work can be done without "learning the trade," and is therefore open to competition from any one who has stout limbs) have been "cut down" twelve and a half cents, per day—by which the *economically* disposed *poor* manufacturers will save the enormous sum of thirty-seven and one half dollars per week! We hope the country may now be considered safe! . . . We will not enlarge on the *noble* conduct of docking one shilling from each poor laborer's earnings—which, serious a matter as it is to the poor man,

LABOR, FEMALE LABOR

is absolutely nothing to the rich manufacturers. We will, however, take the occasion to pay a humble tribute of awe to the genius which could *invent such a "good enough till after election" plan for forming a sort of infant panic*. . . . Avaunt! tricksters! the people and we see through you, "like a book!"

June 17, 1847

A WORKING WOMAN'S SAVINGS

A correspondent of the *Dedham Democrat*, writes from Medway:

I am informed that a female operative in the cotton mill of Hon. Luther Metcalf in this town, has been constantly employed therein for a period of about forty years, and has accumulated some two or three thousand dollars.

But she has dearly earned this little sum at that! Forty years! To be shut up in a cotton prison for forty years—only to support life during that time, and save a paltry pittance at the end of it! Why the manufactory lords who own the blood and sinews there, often think it a poor week's work, if they

WALT WHITMAN

don't in that time "make" that sum. Forty years work in a cotton mill! in the close air, and deafened by the rumbling of machinery, and the freeness of the limbs all cramped by the restraint! Ah, are not the two thousand dollars dearly earned indeed!

May 20, 1847

LIBERALITY, INDEED!

THE factory operatives in Cabotville and Chicopee Falls, are to have forty-five minutes to eat their breakfast and dinner, instead of thirty as heretofore.

March 1, 1847

A LITTLE PARAGRAPH WITH A BIG MORAL

"I can't find bread for my family," said a lazy fellow in company. "Nor I," replied an industrious miller, "I am obliged to *work* for it."

EMIGRANTS

January 22, 1847

THE LATEST RAW HEAD AND BLOODY BONES

WE remarked the other day, that newspapers must always have something to kick up a fuss about; and the newer the thing is, and the less clearly comprehended by general readers, the ampler the latitude for newspaper expansion, in all the phases of what may be styled the alarmative, the hue-and-cryative, and the air-bubble-ative. The latest raw head and bloody bones—or one of the latest—is the prospective evil of the “paupers and criminals” of certain portions of Europe being sent over to the shores of our Republic, at European expense!—Somebody has heard from somebody—who has heard it from somebody else—that the burgomasters of a little German town have sent over *their* paupers and criminals in this way! and the probability is anticipated that other towns will follow suit!

Prodigious probability! Terrible tractoration!

Even our discreet and usually clear-eyed contemporary the *Evening Post* is carried away by this idle hubbub, and writes cogent leaders on it—whose nervous style and strength we would far rather see applied to themes of real fact and interest. And our Whig-Native Representative in Congress, Mr. Seaman, has incontinently delivered himself of a “Be it enacted,” etc., whereby the storm, according to him, is to draw itself off from our devoted heads—a “bill to prevent the importation of paupers and criminals into the United States.” One of the profoundest specimens, is this bill, of legislative nonsense—the attempt to regulate immigration—that we ever read in our life! Canute’s flatterers’ idea of the royal ruling of the waves—stemming the motion of nature by government—is nothing to it! It is utterly ridiculous, impracticable—and, moreover, unnecessary. This is it: by the first section, the consuls of the United States are required to examine on oath, or otherwise as they may think best, all immigrants who may

EMIGRANTS

take passage for the United States; by the second, if upon such examination, such person shall not appear to have been either a pauper or a criminal, the consul shall give him a certificate thereof—otherwise not; by the third, duplicate of these certificates shall be sent to the magistrates of the ports to which immigrants may have embarked, so as to anticipate their arrival if possible; by the fourth, all immigrants who shall arrive in the United States, after six months from the passage of the act, without such certificates, shall be deemed paupers or criminals, and shall be reshipped for the ports which they left; and no master of a vessel shall land them in the United States, under penalty of \$250 for each offence. Short as this bill is, it involves more impossibilities than some of the most plethoric statutes in the world. . . . The *Evening Mirror* (a print which on certain subjects has a more solid judgment than any New York journal whereof we wot,) holds the following language about Mr. S's. absurd project:

The bill would be admirably framed to accomplish its object, if paupers were saints, and criminals were

troubled with consciences. But we do not believe that it can ever become a law, and if it should, we doubt whether it could prevent the importation of a single criminal or pauper, for these are just the class of persons least likely to be deterred from accomplishing their objects by the formality of an oath. . . .

—We may add, for our part, that we possess not the least faith in the stories of governmental attempts in Europe to export their criminals and paupers to America. In the first place, and as to the first-mentioned class, the announcement of such a rule would provoke crime everywhere where the rule should be observed: for who would not come to America, at such a cheap rate? And will it be supposed that sick and infirm denizens of poorhouses—sent thither because they cannot work, or “do anything”—would be started on a long, severe, and exhausting journey, many hundreds of miles—over sea and over land—and in a way of travel which might make a well man sick, and which any other could not stand at all? If this supposition will hold the consequent result would as surely come—the *death* of the poor victims so sent; which would settle the matter—for in the discussion, as far as we have

EMIGRANTS

seen it, it is exclusively considered as a question of dollars and cents. . . . But suppose it be answered that these poor immigrants—from the pauper houses, if you please—are sinewy and stout enough to stand the rough passage, and arrive here safe and sound—with big appetites, and brawny frames. Then let them come and welcome! say we; and the more the better. This Republic—with its incalculable and inexhaustible resources, lying for thousands of miles back of us yet, and not possibly to be developed for ages and ages—*wants the wealth of stout poor men who will work* more than any other kind of wealth! . . . And as to the newspaper stories on which these raw head and bloody bones are based, we think not of them; it is the easiest thing in the world to get up raw heads and bloody bones—either on paper, or with wood and chalk.

[“America must welcome all—Chinese, Irish, German, pauper or not, criminal or not—all, all, without exceptions: become an asylum for all who choose to come. . . . America is not for special types, for the castes, but for the

great mass of people—the vast, surging, hopeful, army of workers.” “With Walt Whitman in Camden.” July 24, 1888. “It is time to dismiss utterly the illusion-compound, half rawhead-and-bloody-bones and half Mysteries-of-Udolpho, inherited from the English writers of the past two hundred years,” Whitman in “The Spanish Element in Our Nationality,” “November Boughs,” written July 20, 1883.]

July 13, 1846

EMIGRANTS—SPEED THEM WEST!

OVER two thousand persons—emigrants from Europe—landed in the metropolis from the Liverpool packets that came up yesterday. Nor is this number unusually large, for one day. A handsome city might be made out of those who come hither from abroad, in the course of a month!

The worst thing about these emigrants, and after they come hither, is, that they do not penetrate immediately into the interior—to the “far West” if possible—and settle down in an agricultural way. And yet, poor things!

EMIGRANTS

there are many of them, perhaps, whose means are all exhausted in their passage. For such, it strikes us, it would be well for some means to be organized, to speed them to the cheap lands of the West. We know there are one or two nominal organizations of the kind; but there are really none worth commending.

A suggestion of this sort depends as much on its promising to *pay well*, as on its necessity and benevolence. We believe that large tracts might be settled in this way at the West, to the advantage of all parties.

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

July 30, 1846

IRELAND

BEAUTIFUL, brave, but miserable land! source of the sunniest genius that has been diffused in the civilized world! alas, when will we see you with the burthen and the bond thrown off? We don't know when we have realized the wrongs and destitution of Ireland so vividly, as in a hasty glance over Ray's Report on the Irish Coercion Bill, a copy of which was this morning kindly left for us by R. S. Church—and for which we thank him. What a black and dreary narrative it furnishes of a nation having the truest and fullest resources, both in the natural talent of its citizens, and in the facilities of the country—and yet all crushed for the want of a judicious and liberal government!

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

December 27, 1847

MORE AND WORSE SUFFERING IN IRELAND,—
WHAT SHALL BE THE REMEDY?

[THIS, 1847, was a fearful year of famine in Ireland. Conditions which had always been bad, became infinitely worse through the tremendous increase in population and the failure of the potato crop. The agitation for repeal of the act of union with England had somewhat subsided by this time, but another revolt was at the time being stimulated and took the form of revolution in the following year, which saw so much revolutionary activity in Europe. Whitman later modified his views on Ireland somewhat. On August 7, 1888, he said: "A search for the cause of the misery of Ireland would be like a search for the cause of the weather. . . . I have no doubt you radicals have a theory about it that would settle the whole trouble by day-break. . . . There were the Fenians, yes: God knows they didn't come too soon or without reason." "With Walt Whitman in Camden," by Horace Traubel.]

WALT WHITMAN

The news from Ireland, which comes by the Hibernia, will cause sadness in many a heart throughout this country. It seems that that unhappy island is fated to undergo another severe season of want, starvation, sickness and death! It is even supposed that these horrible evils will be greater in degree than they were during last winter. . . . The worst part of the whole matter is, that no one can see where and how these evils, *under the present state of things*, are to be obviated. *Surely they will prevail as long as the present organization of relations between England and Ireland prevails.* On the other hand, can any man at all familiar with the whole bearings of the subject, deny that if an Irish parliament with a reasonable stretch of power, met in Dublin, but it would find means to check and eventually obliterate these frightful privations? The cause of Irish suffering lies deeper than the mere want of daily bread. The truest alleviation for it is to be found in *the great principle of Irish repeal.*

Among the accursed outrages which history records, there are few worse ones than

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

those which the English rulers have perpetrated for ages toward Ireland—creating and preserving, of late years, a state of things which results in misery of the most appalling kind to the great masses, merely that a few lordlings, priests of a faith not popular there, and “gentry,” may have still their fat pay—pay that very many of them draw away from Ireland and spend elsewhere. Can a man with a throbbing heart in his breast know these things without every hot and indignant impulse of his blood bubbling up against so cruel and deliberate a system? human flesh and sinews, and their own good soil, sacrificed, that a few pampered strangers may retain *their* serene arrangements—and that “the government” may preserve its dignity? *Dignity!* quotha! while groaning men, and pale women, and dying children, attest the damnable selfishness of the fiction!

WALT WHITMAN

June 17, 1847

IRELAND AND ENGLAND.—ECCENTRICITY OF ENGLISH CHARITY

WE find the following *fact* in the papers; (it does not get half currency enough, however):

The English government in 1835 to liberate 780,793 negroes in the West Indies, gave \$100,000,000. In 1847 it offers \$40,000,000 to feed 5,000,000 of her starving Irish citizens. The freedom of one negro is, therefore, worth more than the lives of five Irishmen.

This is a bitter, but deserved, reproof. English charity, in the comparison, is like what the Chinese call "a lantern on a high pole, which gives light afar off, while immediately under it is darkness." There are as many noble-hearted people in England, doubtless, as in any other nation—more than in most nations, *we* think—but, there is no disguising the fact that they overlook claims upon their brotherhood and sympathy nigh their own doors, in order to meddle with the cause of a race who, physically, are better off than an immense proportion of their own fellow citi-

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

zens. There is a feeling of hatred, in various phases, between the great body of the English and Irish: on the part of the latter, from wrongs accumulated during long ages—and on the part of the former for wrongs *done*. This is what makes it every way desirable to have the noble Irish repeal cause successful; for that offers the only radical remedy for the appalling evil. Two nations bound together, and yet hating each other!—why we can conceive nothing more abhorrent either to their mutual feelings, or mutual safety. It is but just to the weaker, though, to say that the active malevolence has been invariably on the part of England—or rather the past-time English government. When has Ireland ever *oppressed* the other? It is, of course, out of her power—except that oppression, which, in the nature of things, inures from the oppressed to those who wrong them. Likewise, it is but justice to an ample number of the English, to add, that in that nation, too, among a portion of the people, Ireland's rights, (the rights of man,) are not only understood and acknowledged, but ardently espoused.

WALT WHITMAN

February 5, 1847

A PLEA FOR THE STRICKEN ONES!

LOOK at that advertisement in an adjoining column, of Harnden & Co., 6 Wall Street, New York, who engage to remit any sum—small or great—to Ireland, free of discount for their trouble. Reader! if you have *any thing* that you can spare at all, in the name of Him who pledged His sacred word to credit to HIMSELF all aid given to “suffering sad humanity,” we entreat such aid for the distressed ones in that beautiful God-stricken island! Ah, how little we know here of the gloomy horrors there! how hard, amid our plenty, luxury, happiness and health, to realize the want, squalor, misery and disease that accumulate now on so many thousands in Ireland!

Pleas for charitable gifts are so common in newspapers, that when a vivid occasion really arises, it is apt to be passed over by the reader, as one of a monotonous ever-recurring class. So let not *this* occasion be passed over! If there ever were any time when a public mo-

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

tion, spreading from north to south, on behalf of aid to a distressed community, were needed, this is the time. Give *now*. Wait not.—Pestilence and ashy-faced starvation have their iron grip on hundreds and thousands of our fellow creatures—and we can at least balk *some* of the sway of those gloomy powers, if we will. This is no sickly charity, either: it is famine to men and women present, face to face! It is thin-ribbed poverty, prostrate on its heap of straw, foodless, garmentless, chilled, almost praying for death—and its bitter lot made doubly bitter by the sight of similar misery in so many directions around it! Christians! need we to entreat *you*? Forego some of the conventionalisms of devotion, and worship Christ in truth by “ministering unto Him,” through those distressed stricken beings!

September 29, 1847

HOPE FOR IRELAND!

WE have just been reading a verbatim report of the lecture on Ireland, delivered in

this city (at the Institute in Washington Street,) last winter by the Rev. M. Giles. If our readers,—as many of them must—recollect that noble oration as we do, they must remember what a vastly superior discourse it was to the common run of “able” lectures. Indeed, we thought at the time, and so expressed our mind in the paper the next day, that it was one of the very few finished pieces of eloquence, full and harmonious in all its parts, that we ever listened to.

We have, as we said, been reading it again. And it falls upon the appreciation in print with redoubled zest. The whole of the cause, the philosophy, of the distress of Ireland, is mapped out before the reader. A briefly clear history of Ireland is given—its wrongs, its sufferings, its struggles, and the systematic withdrawal of its very stamina and nutriment under English rule. By'r troth! the blood tingles, even in our New World veins, when we hear of such things as are related in history, and in this lecture.

ENGLAND'S OPPRESSION OF IRELAND

December 9, 1847

CANNOT BROOKLYN TOO SAY SOMETHING FOR ITALY?

THE late meeting in New York, to express sympathy for the Pope [Pius IX] and for Italian liberty, meets with the enthusiastic responses of all persons and parties. Every newspaper, far and near, has had something to say in approbation of the meeting and its object. Would it not be well for Brooklyn, too, to add her mite of sympathy for that noble old man who wears the tri-crown? Would it not be well for us to have our meeting, as the New Yorkers have had theirs? There are very many Catholics in this city; and both Protestants and Catholics, however they may differ in religious tenets, agree in their admiration for the present Pope, and his principal movements. In such a meeting—if it should happen to be thought proper to have one—there is no doubt citizens of all beliefs and parties would cordially join.

WALT WHITMAN

March 8, 1847

THE POOR OF SCOTLAND

In the rural and more extreme districts of Scotland, there is also prodigious destitution and scarcity of food! As far as the mere starvation is concerned, the direct cause is the same as in Ireland, viz.: the failure of the potato crop. To help relieve that distress is a work of such evident benevolence that we can hardly suppose any necessity for "argument" about it to exist.

Part III

SLAVERY AND THE MEXICAN WAR

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

[THIS is a new chapter in the life of Walt Whitman, written by himself more than eighty years ago. It tells, in straightforward fashion, the whole story of Whitman's attitude toward slavery and the different political aspects of the slavery question in those years preceding the Civil War when the great moral issue was being formulated and crystallized. Incidentally there is here revealed a moral and material crisis in Whitman's own life, and the manner in which he met it. It was over this question of slavery that differences arose between Whitman, as editor, and Isaac Van Anden, as publisher, of *The Eagle*, which resulted in Whitman's leaving the position he had held for two years and perhaps changed his whole course in life.

When Whitman became editor of *The Eagle*, in March, 1846, slavery was not a live political issue. The status of slavery in all American territory had been fixed since the

"Missouri Compromise" of 1820, and all political factions acquiesced in the state of affairs. Slavery as a moral question had, however, received new impetus through the Abolitionist agitation, and was frequently brought to public attention in various ways. One of the first editorials Whitman wrote for *The Eagle*, on March 18, 1846, was on "Slavers—and the Slave Trade," which he denounced in vigorous terms, declaring that American men-of-war should be used, if necessary, to stop the slave trade in Brazil.

Whitman soon made clear his attitude toward what he called the "ultra Abolitionists." He considered that they had done more harm than good to the cause they professed to aid, but he declared that it was useless to deny the spread of the love of impartial liberty, and urged the full development of "free thoughts" on this subject, and "the utterance of them." He had a word of caution, however, for those who would set at defiance "all discretion, the settled laws of the land, the guaranteed power of citizens, and so on." His hope for reforms, as ex-

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

pressed on December 5, 1846, was in "the discoveries and suggestions of free thought, of public opinion." He drew the line at extreme Abolitionists, but urged the holy right of free expression on the subject of slavery, for "without it we might all become a nation of slaves." A little later he criticized William Lloyd Garrison for ignoring Russia's white slaves. In 1888, Whitman told Horace Traubel: "I was never so much of an Abolitionist as Marvin. . . . Phillips—all of them—thought slavery the one crying sin of the universe. I didn't—though I, too, thought it a crying sin. . . . I never could quite lose the sense of other evils in this evil."

One of his fundamental objections to this anti-slavery agitation was the sectional feeling it was arousing, and some of the best editorials he wrote in those days were those denouncing the bare suggestion of the disunion of the States. It was not long before Whitman saw a way in which to strike at slavery without disturbing those settled laws of the land which he considered jeopardized by Abolition extremism.

WALT WHITMAN

The war with Mexico had been going on for the better part of a year and American troops were deep in Mexican territory. Already the question of annexing Mexican territory was being discussed. Whitman saw that annexation was inevitable. He accepted it and justified it. His spreadeagleism and Democratic-imperialism would have put to shame a later-day Pan-German propagandist, but Whitman's idea, beyond that of extending this empire and spreading Democracy, was to take territory that was sparsely settled and make it bloom through cultivation and throb with virile and free life.

The Wilmot Proviso was offered in Congress in connection with a bill appropriating money to be used in negotiating a Treaty with Mexico, on August 8, 1846. It specifically prohibited slavery in any territory to be acquired from Mexico. This famous Proviso, which led to such tremendous political developments, did not at first attract wide attention. When Whitman first learned of it cannot be definitely stated, but on December 21, 1846, he published an editorial calling upon

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

the Democratic Party and the Democratic members of Congress, "and Whigs, too, if they like," to "set down their feet" and make a stand on the proposition that slavery be forever prohibited in any states to be formed out of annexed territory. Whitman, on February 3, 1847, stated that "We believe *The Brooklyn Eagle* was the very first Democratic paper which alluded to this subject in a decisive manner" and noted that since this first mention every Democratic journal, "without exception," had taken a similar position.

The New York Legislature passed resolutions affirming the principle of the Wilmot Proviso and the House of Representatives passed the Proviso itself. The Senate, however, killed the Proviso and the appropriation bill to which it was attached, when it adjourned without passing either. Then began the long fight over this vital question of the extension of slavery which was not to be settled until the States were reunited by the victory of the North in the Civil War.

Whitman quickly sensed the importance of the principle involved and with great vigor

threw himself into the fight against the extension of slavery. Although the New York Legislature had passed the so-called "anti-slavery resolutions" in January, 1847, the question was side-stepped at the next Democratic convention at Syracuse. In the November election the Democratic Party in New York was overwhelmingly defeated. Whitman declared that the defeat was due to its failure to endorse the principles of the Wilmot Proviso.

This question immediately caused a split in the Democratic Party. There is no space here to recount the historic political conflict, beyond showing Whitman's relationship to it. In his editorials of November 3 and 4, 1847, he stated his attitude in unequivocal terms. He adhered to his original convictions. His party did not stand firm. It began to straddle, and soon divided. The anti-Wilmot Proviso Democrats of the State took the initiative in formulating their opinion by meeting in convention at Albany on January 26, 1847, at which the Proviso Democrats were called upon to repent. Later they were virtually "read

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

out of the party," and held a convention of their own in Utica on February 7, 1848.

Isaac Van Anden, publisher of the *Eagle*, was treasurer of the local Democratic-Republican General Committee, of which Whitman had the year before been secretary. The local committee at first held aloof in its attitude toward the selection of delegates to these two party conventions, but it soon became necessary to take sides, and Van Anden and the regular committee generally, sided with the anti-Wilmot Proviso faction.

As has been shown, the trouble between Whitman and Van Anden had its genesis in Whitman's uncompromising attitude toward the principle of the extension of slavery. It was doubtless aggravated by the two editorials written after the Democratic defeat in November, in both of which he placed the blame upon the party men who had ignored the question of slavery at the Syracuse convention preceding the election. The issue was widely agitated after the adjournment of Congress, and General Lewis Cass had become active in his efforts to have the Demo-

cratic Party drop its advocacy of the Wilmot Proviso. It was largely through his influence that the House of Representatives reversed itself on the Proviso, and he became the Presidential candidate of the anti-proviso men at the Baltimore Convention.

Whitman took up the cudgels against General Cass and otherwise followed a course leading in the opposite direction from that taken by Isaac Van Anden and the anti-proviso men. As late as January 3, 1848, he attacked General Cass's attitude editorially in *The Eagle*, and the party split was then too wide to make it possible for Whitman and Van Anden to go along together. Whitman stood by his principles and Van Anden dispensed with his services. A more detailed account of the circumstances of Whitman's leaving *The Eagle* is given in the introduction to this volume. The editorials on slavery are given in their proper sequence, his last in the general controversy being that on General Cass's letter, on January 3, 1848. Whitman left the *Eagle* about January 20.]

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

March 18, 1846

SLAVERS—AND THE SLAVE TRADE

PUBLIC attention, within the last few days, has been naturally turned to the slave trade—that most abominable of all man's schemes for making money, without regard to the character of the means used for the purpose. Four vessels have, in about as many days, been brought to the American territory, for being engaged in this monstrous business! It is a disgrace and blot on the character of our Republic, and on our boasted humanity!

Though we hear less now-a-days of this trade—of the atrocious slave hunt—of the crowding of a mass of compact human flesh into little more than its equal of space—we are not to suppose that such horrors have ceased to exist. The great nations of the earth—our own first of all—have passed stringent laws against the slave traffic. But Brazil openly encourages it still. And many citizens of Europe and America pursue it notwithstanding its illegality. Still the negro is torn from his simple hut—from his children,

his brethren, his parents, and friends—to be carried far away and made the bondman of a stranger. Still the black-hearted traitors who ply this work, go forth with their armed bands and swoop down on the defenceless villages, and bring their loads of human trophy, chained and gagged, and sell them as so much merchandise!

The slave-ship! How few of our readers know the beginning of the horrors involved in that term! Imagine a vessel of the fourth or fifth class, built more for speed than space, and therefore with narrow accommodations even for a few passengers; a space between decks divided into two compartments three feet three inches from floor to ceiling—one of these compartments sixteen feet by eighteen, the other forty by twenty-one—the first holding two hundred and twenty-six children and youths of both sexes—the second, *three hundred and thirty-six men and women*—and all this in a latitude where the thermometer is at eighty degrees in the shade! Are you sick of the description? O, this is not all, by a good sight. Imagine neither food nor water given

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

these hapless prisoners—except a little of the latter, at long intervals, which they spill in their mad eagerness to get it; many of the women advanced in pregnancy—the motion of the sea sickening those who have never before felt it—dozens of the poor wretches dying, and others already dead, (and they are most to be envied!)—the very air so thick that the lungs cannot perform their office—and all this for filthy lucre! Pah! we are almost a misanthrope to our kind when we think they will do such things!

Of the nine hundred negroes (there were doubtless more,) originally on board the *Pons*, not six hundred and fifty remained when she arrived back, and landed her inmates at Monrovia! It is enough to make the heart pause its pulsations to read the scene presented at the liberation of these sons of misery.—Most of them were boys, of from twelve to twenty years. What woe must have spread through many a negro mother's heart, from this wicked business!

It is not ours to find an excuse for slaving, in the benighted condition of the African.

WALT WHITMAN

Has not God seen fit to make him, and leave him so? Nor is it any less our fault because the chiefs of that barbarous land fight with each other, and take slave prisoners. The whites encourage them, and afford them a market. Were that market destroyed, there would soon be no supply.

We would hardly so insult our countrymen as to suppose that any among them yet countenance a system—only a little portion of whose horrors we have been describing—did not facts prove the contrary. The “middle passage,” is yet going on with all its deadly crime and cruelty. The slave-trade yet exists. *Why?* The laws are sharp enough—too sharp. But who ever hears of their being put in force, further than to confiscate the vessel, and perhaps imprison the crews a few days? But the laws should pry out every man who helps the slave-trade—not merely the sailor on the sea, but *the cowardly rich villain, and speculator on the land*—and punish *him*. It cannot be effectually stopped until that is done—and Brazil, forced by the black muzzles of American and European men-of-

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

war's cannon, to stop her part of the business, too!

December 5, 1846

[“ABOLITION” EXTREMISM DENOUNCED]

IF a man should set out in the world, (somebody has said the amount of this before us,) with the intention of calling every thing by the name his private opinions might desire to give it, he would be in hot water all the days of his life. Still it is very refreshing to hear folks who *will* say what they think;—to us it is refreshing, even if they say what we *don't* think—if we see that honesty and clearness of heart prompt them in the said say. . . . “Liberty, a nation's glory!” sang the Hutchinsons at their concert last evening, (4th)—whereupon certain zealous persons felt themselves called upon to *hiss*. Is not “liberty a nation's glory?” Even more—is not slavery in this Republic an evil which the good and far-sighted men not only in the North, but in the South—in Virginia, in Tennessee, and in North

Carolina, where "emancipation" has many plump, bold advocates—consider to *be* an evil, and one demanding the anxious consideration of every American Democrat—every American politician?

Come, now, let us be candid with ourselves on this subject. The mad fanaticism or ranting of the ultra "Abolitionists" has pretty well spent its fury—and, by the by, has done far more harm than good to the very cause it professed to aid. But it is useless to deny that far and wide, infused in the newly recruited life blood of the Republic with every successive batch of Democratic young men, as they come to take their part in action and politics—spreads deeply and firmly and vividly, this love of impartial "liberty, our nation's glory!" God speed the holy impulse in the breast of every Democratic young man! And if such an one should read these lines, we enjoin him to let no consideration of mere apparent policy—no dread of vulgar ridicule—bar the full development of his soul in such free thoughts, and the utterance of them!

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

That a man has these notions of liberty does not infer that he “goes” for setting at defiance all discretion, the settled laws of the land, the guaranteed power of citizens, and so on. We wish for the downfall of despotism in Russia and Austria—wish it with all our heart; yet who would be so wild as to violate the organized system of those empires, and our treaties with them, in any way? Such violations could do no good, but harm. *It is to the discoveries and suggestions of free thought, of “public opinion,” of liberal sentiments, that we must at this age of the world look for quite all desirable reforms, in government and any thing else.* And the right of free action to that thought, and free expression to it, is a holy right, which once take away, and the advance of the future is checked and dwarfed, as a child by some blighting malady that mars its growth forever. Live, then, the right of thinking, and saying! It may sometimes lead to an excess—but so do the most noble traits of the human character. Without it we might *all* become a nation of slaves!

WALT WHITMAN

December 21, 1846

SET DOWN YOUR FEET, DEMOCRATS!

IF there are any States to be formed out of territory lately annexed, or to be annexed, by any means to the United States, let the Democratic members of Congress, (and Whigs too, if they like,) plant themselves quietly, without bluster, but fixedly and without compromise, on the requirement that *Slavery be prohibited in them forever*. We wish we could have a universal straightforward setting down of feet on this thing, in the Democratic Party. *We must.*

January 16, 1847

DEMOCRATIC DOCTRINE

DESPISING and condemning the dangerous fanatical insanity of "Abolitionism"—as impracticable as it is wild—the Brooklyn *Eagle* just as much condemns the other extreme from that. It likes so well what the Democracy of Massachusetts, in their late State Address, have promulged on the subject—and

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

sounder doctrine no one can find—that it transcribes the Address's sentiments as follows: Speaking of a well-developed and healthy Democracy, it says,—“It may regard slavery anywhere and everywhere, as a great evil, a direct, practical denial of the essential truths of Democracy. It may deplore the misfortune, the misconduct, or the inconsistency of every sister State where slavery exists. It may assert and maintain to the utmost, the right of discussing this subject, and all others that can interest the heart of humanity. It may lament that Congress has no power to purchase the freedom of every slave, and proclaim a universal emancipation. But it will not the less remember, that the power of Congress is limited within narrow and well-defined boundaries,” etc., etc. . . .

“But while we deprecate,” continue the eastern Democrats, “the perversion of a benevolent association into a fierce political party, we discountenance and despise that morbid and sickly fear of disunion, which sometimes robs our private citizens and public officers of their manhood, so far that they

dare not whisper an honest word or attempt a proper act, concerning slavery, lest the slave-holding States take offence. This base surrender of opinion, this cowardly apprehension of Southern discontent, is as offensive to the Southern Democrat as it ought to be to all; and let us recollect, as a fact pregnant with meaning, that it was a Virginia Democrat, in the National Congress, who first stigmatized temporizing Northern politicians by the expressive epithet of 'dough faces.' . . . There is a medium between these opposite extremes of rashness and cowardice. That medium is to be found in the bold and honest but courteous and friendly expression of opinion; in a manly adherence to all constitutional rights, as well our neighbor's as our own; in a calm, but determined vindication of all Constitutional remedies; and finally, in a constant regard for each and all of the great doctrines of republicanism, not one of which can safely or wisely be forgotten or disobeyed, and all of which are essential to the Democratic creed and character."

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

February 3, 1847

THE MOST EMPHATIC EXPRESSION OF OPINION
ON AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT EVER
GIVEN BY THE EMPIRE STATE!

LAST Wednesday, (January 27) the Senate of this State passed what are called the "anti-slavery resolutions," by the powerful vote of twenty-three to six. We gave those resolutions, (presented by Col. Young, Democrat) in our paper of Friday; and have now to add that the same resolutions passed the Assembly on Monday, by *ninety-six votes out of a hundred and five!* Democrat and Whig uniting in the "lower house," (as they did in the upper,) to approve and endorse them!

We believe the Brooklyn *Eagle* was the very first Democratic paper which alluded to this subject in a decisive manner—expressing the conviction that it is the duty of its party to take an unalterable stand against the allowance of slavery in any new territory, under any circumstances, or in any way. Every Democratic journal, with the truest pleasure, we have observed, has been actuated by the

WALT WHITMAN

same determination; for, since then, *each without exception*, (as far as we have seen) *has expressed its approval of that rule*. Some difference exists, as to the propriety of discussing the point now—but as to the principle—the soul of the matter—the Northern Democracy show *one solid unbroken phalanx*.

February 17, 1847

SLAVERY IN NEW TERRITORY

THE stand which the United States House of Representatives has taken in reference to the extension of slavery, over new States, to be acquired by the present war, cannot but meet the approval of all who take ample views of consequences and the future. And yet we must confess to an aversion to the agitation of this subject; there has been so much foolish and fanatical stuff, written and said, on it—so much fiery passion aroused, and prejudice formed—that it is full of trouble! But as to building up the edifice of slavery any firmer—spend the money and lives of the North, (for the North and West bear five-sixths of the

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

burthen of the war,) to make additional slave States, the thing is out of the question, and it seems to us no man worthy the name of true Democrat could wish it.

March 11, 1847

THE OPINIONS OF WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON ON AN IMPORTANT POINT

WASHINGTON and Jefferson, instead of claiming a constitutional right to engraft slavery on free territory, looked with anxious solicitude to the period when even the soil of the slave States should become free, as has actually occurred in New York. Mr. Jefferson had contemplated the insertion of a section for prospective emancipation in the slave laws of Virginia. This is the language of Jefferson, the great apostle of liberty, and clearly shows that instead of claiming a constitutional right, as Mr. Calhoun does, to engraft slavery on all new and free territory which might be acquired, he looked with hope to the time when the slave States should be free States. Mr. Jefferson was no doubt anxious that the time

should arrive when the words which he put forth in the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are born free and equal," should be as true in fact as self-evident in theory.

April 22, 1847

NEW STATES: SHALL THEY BE SLAVE OR
FREE?

IT is of not so much importance, the difference in the idea of a proper time to discuss, if we are only united in the *principle* that whatever new territory may be annexed to the United States, shall be free territory, and not for slaves. With the present slave States, of course, no human being any where out from themselves has the least shadow of a right to interfere; but in new land, added to our surface by the national arms, and by the action of our government, and where slavery does not exist, it is certainly of momentous importance one way or the other, whether that land shall be slave land or not. All ordinarily "weighty issues" are insignificant before this:

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

it swallows them up as Aaron's rod swallowed the other rods. It involves the question whether the mighty power of this Republic, put forth in its greatest strength, shall be used to root deeper and spread wider an institution which Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and all the old fathers of our freedom, anxiously, and avowedly from the bottom of their hearts, sought the extinction of, and considered inconsistent with the other institutions of the land. And if those true and brave old men were now among us, can any candid person doubt which "side" they would espouse in this argument? Would the great apostle of Democracy—in his clear views of right and wrong, and their linked profit and loss—would he *now*, seeing the stalwart giants of the free young West, contrasted with the meagre leanness of the South—meagre with all her noble traits—would *he* hesitate in bending his divine energies to the side of freedom?

The man who accustoms himself to *think*, when such matters are put before him, and does not whiff his opinion rapidly out, from mere heedlessness, or from a more degrading

motive, will see the wide and radical difference between the unquestionable folly, and wicked wrong, of "abolitionist" interference with slavery in the Southern States—and this point of establishing slavery in fresh land. With the former we have nothing to do; but with the latter, we should all be derelict to our highest duties as Christians, as men, and as Democrats, if we did not throw ourselves into the field of discussion, using the utmost display of every energy wherewith God has endowed us, in behalf of the side which reason and religion proclaim as the right, one. Is *this* the country, and *this* the age, where and when we are to be told that slavery must be propped up and extended? And shall any respectable portion of our citizens be deluded either by the sophisms of Mr. Calhoun, or those far, very far, lower influences of the darkest and meanest phases of demagogism, which are rife more in the North than the South, to act in a matter which asks consideration purely on points of high justice, human rights, national advantage, and the safety of the Union in the future?

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

April 27, 1847

RIGHTS OF SOUTHERN FREEMEN AS WELL AS NORTHERN FREEMEN.—MR. CALHOUN'S SPEECH

IN the speech of Mr. Calhoun delivered at Charleston in March last he says:

Indeed, after all that has occurred during the last twelve months, it would be almost idiotic to doubt, that a large majority of both parties in the non-slaveholding States, have come to a fixed determination to appropriate all the territories of the United States now possessed, or hereafter to be acquired, to themselves, *to the entire exclusion of the slaveholding States.*

Now is it not strange that a man of the conceded ability of Mr. Calhoun, of his reputed precision of logic and accuracy of expression, should use language like this? "*The entire exclusion of the slave-holding states!*" Mr. Calhoun surely cannot mean what he says. He speaks as though the people of the slaveholding States were all slaveholders. This is any thing but true. In every slaveholding State, we believe, except perhaps South Carolina, a majority of the white freemen are non-slaveholders. Will the exclusion of slavery

from the new territory deter *them* from going with their axes and their ploughs into its forests, and making their houses upon its unfurrowed surface? Certainly not. They will go with their free brethren from the North and, not deeming labor degrading, will rear States which will prosper and become mighty under the power of *free* arms and stout hearts. The only persons who will be excluded will be the *aristocracy* of the South—the men who work only with other men's hands. If they cannot condescend to labor, to fell the forests and to plough its fields with their own hands, but must have *slaves* to do what the yeomanry of the North and the majority of the white men at the South regard as a proud, virtuous and noble calling—why then they can stay away; and it is difficult to see where the hardship lies of permitting them to do so. If they are willing to regard labor as honorable and to work like the rest of us, they can go into the new territory and find it open to them as it is to the rest who work for a living. But no—they insist that at the outset *freemen shall be excluded* to enable *them* to monopolize the

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

land and cultivate it by their slaves. Let us see if this is not the true state of the case. From the Northern and Eastern States a constant tide of brave, industrious and energetic *freemen* is flowing to the new territory. Such has been the case for the last fifty years, and such men have founded and matured the great—*nations*, we had almost said—of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, &c. Into those regions have rushed, too, thousands and tens of thousands of free men from the slaveholding States who have been eager to labor where they could do so without degradation. Tens and hundreds of thousands more like them from the East, North *and South*, will be eager to occupy the new territory which may be acquired from Mexico, if they can go and not find themselves the equals only of negro slaves. Where the land is cultivated by slaves it is *not* also cultivated by freemen. It is not in South Carolina and Virginia and the other slave States, respectable (at any rate it is not so practically regarded) for white men to labor on land.

The voice of the North proclaims that *labor*

WALT WHITMAN

must not be degraded. The young men of the free States must not be shut out from the new domain (where slavery does not now exist) by the *introduction* of an institution which will render their honorable industry no longer respectable. Slavery must not exact *too much* from the Democracy of the North. That Democracy has been faithful to the "compromise of the Constitution" by protecting the institution of slavery (uncongenial as that institution is to all the instincts and sympathies of Democracy) within the limits that the Constitution found it; and it will be the part of wisdom in its advocates not to weaken its security by further and unreasonable exactions. Instead of a generous recognition of the tolerant spirit with which the North has regarded the institution in the States where it exists, and has conceded almost every thing of power and office and station to the slaveholding States, that spirit is requited much too often by flings and imputations of meanness and of a mercenary spirit, not likely to perpetuate Northern forbearance. Witness the following extract from Mr. Calhoun's speech:

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

Fortunately, then, the crusade against our domestic institution does not originate in hostility of interests. If it did, the possibility of arresting the threatened danger, and saving ourselves, short of a disrapture of the Union, would be altogether hopeless; *so predominant is the regard for interest in those States, over all other considerations.*

Was it a mean or mercenary spirit that has induced the Democracy of the North to grant the Presidency, with all its powerful patronage, to the South, ever since the foundation of the government, with the exception of a single term? On the other hand might we not with truth charge faithlessness and utter cupidity to the South? It has monopolized by an *immense* disproportion the offices of the government. It proved faithless to the Democracy of the North in respect to Mr. Van Buren. It is entirely unreliable as to Mr. Wright. Mr. Calhoun is quite right in his conclusion that "it would be almost idiotic to doubt, that a large majority of both parties in the non-slaveholding States have come to a fixed determination" in respect to the new territory—but is wrong in saying that determination is to exclude the people of the slave States. It

WALT WHITMAN

is to throw the territory open *on equal terms* to the people of the North *and* of the South.

September 1, 1847

AMERICAN WORKINGMEN, VERSUS SLAVERY

THE question whether or no there shall be slavery in the new territories which it seems conceded on all hands we are largely to get through this Mexican war, is a question between *the grand body of white workingmen, the millions of mechanics, farmers, and operatives of our country*, with their interests on the one side—and the interests of the few thousand rich, “polished,” and aristocratic owners of slaves at the South, on the other side. Experience has proved, (and the evidence is to be seen now by any one who will look at it) that a stalwart mass of respectable workingmen, cannot exist, much less flourish, in a thorough slave State. Let any one think for a moment what a different appearance New York, Pennsylvania, or Ohio, would present—how much less sturdy independence and family happiness there would be—were slaves the workmen

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

there, instead of each man as a general thing being his own workman. We wish not at all to sneer at the South; but leaving out of view the educated and refined gentry, and coming to the "common people" of the whites, everybody knows what a miserable, ignorant, and shiftless set of beings they are. Slavery is a good thing enough, (viewed partially,) to the rich—the one out of thousands; but it is destructive to the dignity and independence of all who work, and to labor itself. An honest poor mechanic, in a slave State, is put on a par with the negro slave mechanic—there being many of the latter, who are hired out by their owners. It is of no use to reason abstractly on this fact—farther than to say that the pride of a Northern American freeman, poor though he be, will not comfortably stand such degradation.

The influence of the slavery institution is to bring the dignity of labor down to the level of slavery, which, God knows! is low enough. And this it is which must induce *the working-men of the North, East, and West, to come up, to a man, in defence of their rights, their honor, and*

WALT WHITMAN

that heritage of getting bread by the sweat of the brow, which we must leave to our children. Let them utter forth, then, in tones as massive as becomes their stupendous cause, that their calling shall *not* be sunk to the miserable level of what is little above brutishness—sunk to be like owned goods, and driven cattle!—We call upon every mechanic of the North, East, and West—upon the carpenter, in his rolled up sleeves, the mason with his trowel, the stone-cutter with his brawny chest, the blacksmith with his sooty face, the brown fisted ship-builder, whose clinking strokes rattle so merrily in our dock yards—upon shoemakers, and cartmen, and drivers, and paviors, and porters, and millwrights, and furriers, and ropemakers, and butchers, and machinists, and tinmen, and tailors, and hatters, and coach and cabinet makers—upon the honest sawyer and mortar-mixer too, whose sinews are their own—and every hard-working man—to speak in a voice whose great reverberations shall tell to all quarters that the *workingmen* of the free United States, and their business, are not willing to be put on the level of negro slaves,

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

in territory which, if got at all, must be got by taxes sifted eventually through upon them, and by their hard work and blood. But most of all we call upon *the farmers*, the workers of the land—that prolific brood of brown faced fathers and sons who swarm over the free States, and form the bulwark of our Republic, mightier than walls or armies—upon them we call to say whether *they* too will exist “free and independent” not only in name but also by those social customs and laws which are greater than constitutions—or only so by statute, while in reality they are put down to an equality with slaves!

There can be no half way work in the matter of slavery in new territory: we must either have it there, or have it not. Now if either the slaves themselves, or their owners, had fought or paid for or gained this new territory, there would be some reason in the pro-slavery claims. But every body knows that the cost and work come, forty-nine fiftieths of it, upon the free men, the middling classes and working-men, who do their own work and own no slaves. Shall *these* give up all to the aristocratic owners

of the South? Will even the poor white free-men of the South be willing to do this? It is monstrous to ask such a thing!

Not the least curious part of the present position of this subject is, the fact *who* advance the claims of slavery, and the singular manner in which those claims are half-allowed by men at the North who ought to know better. The truth is that all practice and theory—the real interest of the planters themselves—and the potential weight of the opinions of all our great statesmen, Southern as well as Northern, from Washington to Silas Wright—are strongly arrayed in favor of limiting slavery to where it already exists. For this the clear eye of Washington looked longingly; for this the great voice of Jefferson plead, and his sacred fingers wrote; for this were uttered the prayers of Franklin and Madison and Monroe. But now, in the South, stands a little band, strong in chivalry, refinement and genius—headed by a sort of intellectual Saladin—as-suming to speak in behalf of sovereign States, while in reality they utter their own idle theories; and disdainfully crying out against the rest

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

of the Republic, for whom their contempt is but illy concealed. The courage and high-tone of these men are points in their favor, it must be confessed. With dexterous but brazen logic they profess to stand on the Constitution against a principle whose very existence dates from some of the most revered framers of that Constitution! And these—this band, really little in numbers, and which could be annihilated by one pulsation of the stout free heart of the North—these are the men who are making such insolent demands, in the face of the working farmers and mechanics of the free States—the nine-tenths of the population of the Republic. We admire the chivalric bearing (sometimes a sort of impudence) of these men. So we admire, as it is told in history, the dauntless conduct of kings and nobles when arraigned for punishment before an outraged and too long-suffering people. . . . But the course of mortal light and human freedom, (and their consequent happiness,) is not to be stayed by such men as they. Thousands of noble hearts at the North—the entire East—the uprousing giant of the free East—will

WALT WHITMAN

surely, when the time comes, sweep over them and their doctrines as the advancing ocean tide obliterates the channel of some little brook that erewhile ran down the sands of its shore. Already the roar of the waters is heard; and if a few short-sighted ones seek to withstand it, the surge, terrible in its fury, will sweep them too in the ruin.

October 28, 1847

REAL QUESTION AT ISSUE!

A very few days, and the Democratic electors of Kings County will be called upon to put their votes in the ballot boxes—to signify their desire for the success of the Democratic-Republican ticket. On the one hand we behold that ticket, as we have it at the head of our paper; and on the other hand the Whig ticket. There are no others—at least no others except one or two attached to the little temporary *isms* of the day; and these must be thrown out of the account altogether. All minor points, then subside into comparative insignificance before *one*: *Shall the Democratic*

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

ticket succeed, or shall the Whig ticket succeed? We know that certain persons bring other points to bear; but, we think, all will acknowledge that the question we have italicised above, like Aaron's rod, swallows up the rest. —Moreover, this is *the* question, at present. There is a time for all things; and we consider the staving off of the real issue, through some other issue which is not appropriate here, and at this time, to be unnecessary. A man may be friendly enough to, and an avowed advocate of, the "Wilmot Proviso," and still not feel in the least degree that the whole State is to be lost to us, nor that the coming election is the proper arena to bring it into discussion. What have the officers to be chosen next week—the lieutenant governor, the comptroller, the State treasurer, &c.,—what have they, in their official capacity, to do with the bearings of that proviso? We repeat, that we consider the great question of next Tuesday to be, whether our Democratic ticket shall be chosen, or the Whig ticket.

Can there be a Democrat—*can* there be one in Kings County at all events—who will say

that the *Whig* ticket ought to be chosen? If there be, we should like to know that man, that we might let the rest of our party know him too! Such an avowal would stamp any one of our ranks, not only as against us, but worse—for while nominally with us, he would be doing all he could against us. Differences of opinion may honestly exist in members of the same party, on many subjects—but, for one, we recognize no distinction on the point we allude to above, except the distinction between Whig and Democrat. A man has, of course, a right to be a Whig, if so, it pleaseth him; *but no man has a right to call himself a Democrat, and either wish for, or do for, the triumph of the Whig.* More than that, it is to be remembered that *passiveness* in voting for the right is almost as bad as *activity* in voting for the wrong. If there be any Democratic reader of this article, who, for any cause, has felt a willingness to let himself be absent from the polls, and help the Whigs through *not* voting for the Democrats, we conjure him in the most serious manner to weigh well such a course, before he allows himself to pursue it.

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

It is by such a course, if pursued by any number of people, that we may expect to lose our ticket. The circumstances of our party, now, are such that every true man must come up to the mark.

November 3, 1847

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST, AND FOR THE FUTURE

IN the midst of the gloom of the defeat which has just befallen the Democratic ticket, and the remarkable triumph of the Whigs, it will not be unprofitable for us, amid all the bitterness, to derive as much of a lesson from the whole affair as we can. And that is not a small or an unprofitable lesson either. We hold to the opinion, as a general thing, that when a party gets defeated it has done *something* to deserve that defeat. As to the main principles of our party, we can never compromise them; we can never, in prosperity or adversity, acknowledge that they are either wrong in themselves, or deserve the least disfavor from the public. But there may be

other points wherein we have not taken the proper means to ensure success.

As a fact without reasonable question, we would mention that our party has not been, of late, sufficiently bold, open and radical, in its avowals of sentiment. We never in the world succeed so well as when we take this bold, unflinching, and radical ground. The adoption, by such an immense majority, of the new Constitution, with its startling changes, almost amounting to a pure Democracy, shows that the people of New York will honor almost any draughts upon their radical ideas, and on those once derided, but now widely worshipped doctrines which the great Jefferson and the glorious [William] Leggett promulgated. These ideas form the best elements of the Democratic creed, and of the Democratic Party. If they are offended, their wrath may be slow, but it is sure and terrible. The heartier then, our party's avowals of high radical doctrine—and the farther it goes for freedom—the more sternly it rebukes and puts aside conservatism—the stauncher it stands by its faithful ones who

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

have made enemies because they were *too* faithful—the more likely to succeed. But all conservative influence is pestilential to our party. It may succeed for a day or a year—but fate itself is not more fixed and immutable than that the more liberal doctrines will gradually become paramount, and their advocates honored and trusted. It must be so, in the very nature of things. Every successive ten years has witnessed the most astonishing strides in political reform in this country. And it is to this progressive spirit that we look for the ultimate attainment of the perfectest possible form of government—that will be where there is the *least* possible *government*, so called—when monopolies shall be things that *were*, but are not—when the barbarism of restrictions on trade shall have passed away—when, (and *this* “when” we transfer to the present tense,) the plague spot of slavery, with all its taint to freemen’s principles and prosperity, shall be allowed to spread no *further*; and when the good old Democratic Party—the party of the sainted Jefferson and Jackson—the party, which,

with whatever errors of men, has been the perpetuator of all that is really good and noble and true in our institutions—the time-honored Democratic Party shall be existing and flourishing over the grave of this fleeting Whigism, and all its passing brood.

As to the *Whig triumph*, because that faction have elected their officers now, we laugh it to scorn. It is a triumph to them, merely because our Democracy have been distracted and sullen with one another, and would not endorse the ticket that was presented to them, nor the proceedings of the Syracuse convention. But with this election, it is not at all unlikely that the distraction will cease. We look for a better state of feeling. Conservatism, in all its aspects, must leave the field—and the Democracy must unite on its boldest and noblest and most radical doctrines. *Then* is the time for triumph, indeed! *Then* is the time for the blood of our young men to swell with ardor, pride and determination! All hands can then fight with unanimity and energy. They will not be disheartened at any mishap. But we fear no mishap—because,

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

when once on the bold high stand of true and unflinchingly avowed Democratic principle, we carry with us every sympathy that is honest and manly, and that comes from warm hearts!

November 4, 1847

VERDICT OF THE UNDAUNTED DEMOCRACY OF THE EMPIRE STATE IN BEHALF OF THE JEFFERSONIAN ORDINANCE

THE intelligent Washington editor of the *Journal of Commerce* writes as follows:

Washington, November 2.—We are looking, with intense interest, to the result of the New York State election. The prevalent idea here is that the Democrats will elect a majority of Senators and Assemblymen, but that the Whigs will carry their ticket for State officers. Should the Hunkers be defeated, it will do much to establish, not only in New York but in all the non-slaveholding States, the principles of the Wilmot Proviso.

Our late defeat—one of the most sweeping and thorough that ever happened—is undoubtedly owing to the fact that a majority of our convention at Syracuse declined to endorse

the principles of the Jeffersonian proviso—for so it should be called. The immortal author of the Declaration of Independence is as much the originator of the proviso as Columbus was the discoverer of this continent. Vespuceius had his office, and Mr. Wilmot has his. It is an error to say, however, that the Syracuse Convention decided *against* that principle—they only “let it alone”; and not a few very plausible reasons were given for this course, too. *We must plant ourselves firmly on the side of freedom, and openly espouse it.* The late election is a terrific warning of the folly of all half-way policy in such matters—of all compromises that neither receive or reject a great idea to which the people are once fully awakened.

Yes: the people are now fully awakened to this matter of enacting slavery into new and free ground. It is idle to attempt staving off its discussion. It is *the* topic. Men must wear their opinions about it on their faces, and in their tongues—for the great mass of the Democracy say, in tones of thunder, that they will not be trifled with. If a man be

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

sincerely of the belief that the evil of slavery, as a thing to be introduced into the new ground, should *not* be met by this Jeffersonian ordinance, or something like it, let him entertain that opinion, we say with all our heart. *Only let him deliberately announce it as his doctrine*, that the people may know where to find him, and that the *future* may know what to do with him. He may be as honest as Aristides—only let him be as frank. The day is not far distant when politicians will be as eager to prove that they were in this matter on the side of freedom, as ever were men to escape companionship with the cholera or yellow fever!

And this verdict of New York, on the subject of the proviso, is indeed a most emphatic one. But six short months have passed away, “*nay, not so much,*” since the Democracy of this State, with the serenity and strength of a giant, achieved with calmness a complete triumph in its State ticket, and showed a palpable majority of sixteen or eighteen thousand. Moreover, the well-known drilling and discipline of our party should be taken

into account. Does any man believe that with this immense preponderance, and this almost military party obedience, a great body of the people could have frowned upon us, and drawn aside from us in wrath, through any common reason? Think not so for one moment! The people are not in the habit of wheeling about on their likings so suddenly. They have not learned, either to back and fill, to expand and contract their faith on the India rubber principle; for it is no political fickleness that has made this mighty change. They love our party yet; but it must be true to itself, and to its great duties—true to the memory of the Revolutionary Fathers who fought for freedom, and not for slavery—true to him, the calm-browed one, and the noblest Democrat of them all, that, in his original draft of the Declaration of American Independence, inserted as one prime charge against the King and Parliament of Great Britain that they had not taken measures to prevent the extension of slavery in the Colonies. Have the ages so rolled backward, and humanity with them, that what we went to

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

war to *stop*, seventy years ago, we shall now keep up a war to *advance*?

November 8, 1847

A QUESTION ANSWERED

“Is he a barn-burner, or an old hunker?” says the *Star*, in relation to us. *Neither*, most curious and venerable friend. We are ambitious of neither of those nick names. We consider that enough sourness and bad blood have already been caused by persons in the Democratic Party ranging themselves under those designations; and are certainly not at all ambitious of either appellation. We are a *Democratic-Republican*.

As one beneficial result, at least, of the events of last week, [the elections in which the Democrats were badly defeated] we anticipate the allowing of the absurd nick-names which the *Star* mentions, to be merged in oblivion. They are meaningless and unprofitable names. They do not describe a general difference in any way; for persons among each class have their preferences; and the greatest difference

WALT WHITMAN

seems to be a difference about men. This, we take it, will hereafter be too weak a difference (probably it will be altogether obliterated), to disturb the future movements of our party.

November 17, 1847

SLAVERY IN DELAWARE

WE cut the following extract from the Independent *Delawarian*. It indicates—says the *Trenton News*—a decided movement irrespective of party, in Delaware, to remodel the State Constitution and abolish slavery.

Since the country has passed the feverish excitement produced by intemperate Abolition appeals, the sober second thought indicates very plainly both the interests and the duty of such States as are prepared for a change on this vital subject. Delaware and Kentucky, Maryland and Virginia, are approaching the crisis when every long-cherished prejudice will give way, and the incubus which hangs over their prosperity be removed.

THE EXTENSION OF SLAVERY

January 3, 1848

THE LATE LETTER OF SENATOR CASS

GEN. Lewis Cass has lately been writing a letter on important topics. In it he declares boldly that we should "war to the knife" with Mexico, and that no peace should be agreed upon till an indemnity for all expenses and debts be rendered by the constituted authorities of that country—in which latter idea the country and he are of one opinion. He thinks too that every State must have perfect local control in the management of its affairs, else divisions and bickerings would operate incessantly to split the confederation into sectional fragments. Mr. Cass is opposed to slavery, but he is likewise opposed to any "improper interference" with the government and management of particular States. *Therefore* he could not agree to the principle sought to be established by "the Wilmot Proviso," that in any newly acquired territory the government of the Union declare, that in such acquired land no slavery should be permitted.

WALT WHITMAN

All this might come with a better show of sense, if the legislative power of Congress over all its territories, were not as supreme while they *are* territories, as the State Legislatures over their respective States. While Congress is the local government, too, for these territories, it may be viewed merely as a question of policy, of profit and loss, whether to *introduce* negro slavery into those States or not. Is there a sane man who will say that it is profitable so to introduce slavery?

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THE UNION OF STATES

February 6, 1847

THE NEXT BLESSING TO GOD'S BLESSING.—
SHALL IT BE JEOPARDIZED?

IF there is a political blessing on earth, that deserves to stand in the near neighborhood of the great common blessings vouchsafed us by God—life, light, freedom, and the beautiful and useful ordinations of nature—that blessing is involved in the UNION of these United States together into an integral Republic, “many in one.”—Quite all the happiness that we enjoy, which springs from the political institutions of our country—much of our ability to confer happiness on the thousands from abroad that annually claim homes here—all the respect paid our names in foreign climes, the regard to our citizens' rights, and the opening of avenues to commercial profit—depend likewise on the same Union. Further than this: the perpetuity of the sacred

WALT WHITMAN

fire of freedom, which now burns upon a thousand hidden, but carefully tended, altars in the Old World, waits the fate of our American Union. O, sad would be the hour when that Union should be dissolved! Then might the good genius of humanity weep tears of blood, bitterer than any ever before shed for the downfall of her high hopes! Then might tyrants cry the "Aha!" of their scorn and selfishness, with tenfold hatred to the swelling impulse for man's rights. Then were man's rights indeed to be despaired of—for many a long age, at least! This Union, dissolved? Why the very words are murky with their own most monstrous portent!

And yet these words are flippantly turned over and over in the mouths of men, at the present time—not as we turn them from our pen, with feelings so vivid in horror toward their import that the very fingers almost revolt from tracing them—but as words involving a very possible contingency, which may come to pass, (that curse of heaven!) if certain angry demands are not allowed, or certain bad-tempered avowals are not hu-

THE UNION OF STATES

mored. The words are on the tongues of American legislators in Congress assembled—are resounded back again from that section which is called “the cradle of liberty”—are taken up and borne about, and may thus become so “seen too oft,” and “familiar to the face,” that men’s minds will not turn away from them with loathing, as at first. We hear these angry recriminations and threats with alarm which we will not disguise—in connection with a certain momentous question which is now before Congress [the extension of slavery in new territory], and the finale of which, when it comes, is supposed capable of shaking the foundation of our Republic through and through, as the tempest shakes a noble ship at sea. Upon this question our views go with the great majority, with nineteen twentieths, of the Democracy of the West and of the North—which we doubt not are immutable in their determination on the point. But why need the discussion of the subject be made the stalking-horse of those unkind allusions by Northern members of Congress toward the South, which we see so frequently

uttered—tallied by similar flings in certain of the newspapers. *There is no need of discussing the proposition to which we allude, with any more angry tone, with any more retorts, or any more harsh allusions, than two men might use in discussing a point of mathematics.* All such harshness and retorts are wretched. The points of the case are susceptible of as plain demonstration, as that ten and ten are twenty. No warmth is called for in debating the matter; no insinuations are legitimate; no covert inferences are needed. The truth lies in plain light, and can be plainly stated, without, it seems to us, reasonably hurting the feelings of any man, however tender his “sectional jealousies.” It is one of the curses of the politics of this country, that the great questions which agitate its weal or woe, cannot be treated with something like the calmness wherewith men treat matters relating to their personal bargains, trades and offers in business. When a farmer talks with his neighbor the point if ashes be or be not best after a crop of oats, on his fields, he does not get in a passion and make angry threats. Will our legislators get in a

THE UNION OF STATES

passion and make threats when these great matters in which an empire is interested, and an ample posterity, too, are brought before them for adjudication?

But all this matter is most important to us, (in its connection with the drift of the present article,) as it relates to the way in which it comes to bear on the dissolution of the Union. At the very threshold of the debate, the idea of such a contingency, or the anyway recognized possibility of it, should be scouted by all legislators—as it surely is by the body of the people! No man should dare to wag a syllable which acknowledges *that* result as one to be soberly thought of. In the past history of the world, the angry excitements of men, working in their fury, have done many wicked things—whose evil consequences have descended to ages afterward. But not in the whole train, long, black, and disastrous as it is, lies a deed which may so damn its author to the hatred of his race—place him so high in the accursed list of traitors to their country, cowards, assassins of peace, malignant betrayers of their brethren—as the deed of him who should

WALT WHITMAN

provoke, or make the first move in, the dissolution of the American Union. Well might the voice of humanity rise—as it would—in one great howl of scorn, indignation, and resentment, at such a severer of bands which God has evidently smiled upon. Well might after ages invent new epithets of ignominy and hatred for him and his most wicked conduct.

February 24, 1847

WHAT AN IDEA!

THE New York *Sun* (24th) says, in an article against the *unity* of the United States as one government: "The liberty of the country is centered in the independence of the States, and with a good understanding with each other a general government might be dispensed with. Our government is a union of free States, and not a consolidation of States."

. . . Our government, for certain purposes, *is* a "consolidation." The wisdom of that principle is proved in the past and present; but in the local matters of the States, this consolidation does not give Congress the right

THE UNION OF STATES

to interfere.—Perhaps no human institution—
from which so much clashing was expected—
has ever turned out better, than the “separate
independence” of the Federal and State gov-
ernments. With one exception, (and even
that, in its results, only proves the sanatory
powers of the consolidation), they have never
jarred. Each has its sphere apart from the
other—and each keeps in its sphere.

But the worst of such insidious articles as
the *Sun's*, is that they depress the idea of the
sacredness of the *bond of union of these States*.
That bond is the foundation of incomparably
the highest political blessings enjoyed in the
world! And the position of things at present
demands that its sacredness should be recog-
nized by *every and all* American citizens—
however they differ on points of doctrine or
abstract rights.

February 26, 1847

THE UNION NOW AND FOREVER!

DOES the *Sun* mean really to say that each
“united State” *is* a separate sovereign in

fact, and in its own right? that it could (for that would follow,) withdraw itself at pleasure from the Union? that it could do *anything at all*, in conflict with the supreme power of the Constitution and Congress? that it is "independent" any farther than that it has full power to manage its own *local* affairs, and supervise its *local* institutions? Nay: we think it time that such an extreme heresy (appropriately nestling in the extreme sections of Massachusetts and South Carolina,) should be discountenanced by all true Americans. Especially at this juncture, is the potency of the Union to be upheld: for angry voices are already heard even at the capitol, threatening it under certain contingencies. . . . Perhaps, however, the difference between the *Sun* and us involves but the explanation of a word. "Consolidation" (as we suppose) comprises the idea of *compact*, too; and our States are certainly compacted; while just as certainly the greatest and amplest powers of the government are consolidated in Congress and the President. But Congress and the President can't go a step

THE UNION OF STATES

farther than the Constitution allows them—wherein is the palladium of the “states” rights.

“The Union of the States,” says the *Sun*, “consists, therefore, in each State maintaining its own sovereignty and independence, passing its own laws, providing for its own local government; and each State by a constitutional compact becomes united within itself.” In such talk as this, though it is quite common, there is evidently a misapplication of terms. If each State *really* possesses “sovereignty and independence,” each can do what she pleases, irrespective of any limit. But there are so many things which the States cannot do. Among other things they have no right to “nullify” the Union.—“*E pluribus UNUM*” stares such a remark as we have quoted at the commencement of the paragraph, in the face, and puts it down. . . . We, perhaps, are as much a “strict constructionist” as our New York contemporary *can be*—as much in favor of keeping back power from a central point, and having it wielded by the people who are to be directly acted on

WALT WHITMAN

by it. But we stand by the Constitution, and the Union which stands with *it*—and we say that no dogma or abstraction—no fancied grief or rebellious excitement—no long-drawn inference—shall allow the foundation of a point of danger to that sacred twain.

May 22, 1847

DISUNION

THINKING, as we do, that hardly any evil which could be inflicted on the people of this hemisphere, and the cause of freedom all over the world, would be so great as the disunion of these States—their parting in bitterness and ill-blood—we believe it incumbent on every Democrat always to bear testimony in the same spirit and the same words, as one now in heaven—"the *Union!* it must and shall be preserved!" We care very little what the ostensible cause may be—of what fanatics (of which there are various kinds, in wide removes), may state it to be. Any man, with ordinary judgment must know, that the dis-

THE UNION OF STATES

junction of the Union would sow a prolific crop of horrors and evils, like dreary night, compared to which the others are but as a daylight cloud.

WAR WITH MEXICO

May 11, 1846

[THE MEXICAN WAR JUSTIFIED]

YES: Mexico must be thoroughly chastised! —We have reached a point in our intercourse with that country, when prompt and effectual demonstrations of force are enjoined upon us by every dictate of right and policy. The news of yesterday has added the last argument wanted to prove the necessity of an immediate Declaration of War by our government toward its southern neighbor.

We are justified in the face of the world, in having treated Mexico with more forbearance than we have ever yet treated an enemy—for Mexico, though contemptible in many respects, is an enemy deserving a vigorous “lesson.” We have coaxed, excused, listened with deaf ears to the insolent gasconnade of her government, submitted thus far to a most offensive rejection of an Ambassador personi-

WAR WITH MEXICO

fying the American nation, and waited for years without payment of the claims of our injured merchants. We have sought peace through every avenue, and shut our eyes to many things, which had they come from England or France, the President would not have dared to pass over without stern and speedy resentment. We have dammed up our memory, of what has passed in the South years ago—of the devilish massacres of some of our bravest and noblest sons, the children not of the South alone, but of the North and West—massacres, not only in defiance of ordinary humanity, but in violation of all the rules of war. Who has read the sickening story of those brutal wholesale murders, so useless for any purpose except gratifying the cowardly appetite of a nation of bravos, willing to shoot down men by the hundred in cold blood—without panting for the day when the prayer of that blood should be listened to—when the vengeance of a retributive God should be meted out to those who so ruthlessly and needlessly slaughtered His image?

That day has arrived. We think there can

WALT WHITMAN

be no doubt of the truth of yesterday's news; and we are sure the people here, ten to one, are for prompt and *effectual* hostilities. Tame newspaper comments, such as appear in the leading Democratic print of today, in New York, and the contemptible anti-patriotic criticisms of its contemporary Whig organ, do *not* express the sentiments and wishes of *the people*. Let our arms now be carried with a spirit which shall teach the world that, while we are not forward for a quarrel, America knows how to crush, as well as how to expand!

June 6, 1846

ANNEXATION

THE more we reflect on the matter of annexation as involving a part of Mexico, or even the main bulk of that republic, the more do doubts and obstacles resolve themselves away, and the more plausible appears that, at first blush, most difficult consummation. The scope of our government, (like the most sublime principles of Nature), is such that it can readily fit itself, and extend itself, to almost

WAR WITH MEXICO

any extent, and to interests and circumstances the most widely different.

It is affirmed, and with great probability, that in several of the departments of Mexico—the large, fertile and beautiful one of Yucatan, in particular—there is a wide popular disposition to come under the wings of our eagle. The Yucatecos are the best and most industrious citizens in Mexico. They have for years been on bad terms with the central power, and have repeatedly reached open ruptures with the executive and the federal government. The new Congress, which the last accounts mention as having just assembled at Merida, the capital, is acting at the present moment in a mannner entirely independent of Mexico—passing tariff laws for itself, and so on. Rumor also states that a mission had been, or is to be, despatched to the United States, with the probable object of treating for annexation or something like it.

Then there is California, in the way to which lovely tract lies Santa Fé; how long a time will elapse before *they* shine as two new stars in our mighty firmament?

WALT WHITMAN

—Speculations of this sort may seem idle to some folks. So do they not, we are assured, to many who look deep into the future. Nor is it the much condemned lust of power and territory that makes the popular heart respond to the idea of these new acquisitions. Such greediness might very properly be the motive of widening a less liberal form of government; but such greediness is not ours. We pant to see our country and its rule far-reaching, only inasmuch as it will take off the shackles that prevent men the even chance of being happy and good—as most governments, are now so constituted that the tendency is very much the other way. We have no ambition for the mere physical grandeur of this Republic. Such grandeur is idle and deceptive enough. Or at least it is only desirable as an aid to reach the truer good, the good of the whole body of the people.

June 29, 1846

MORE STARS FOR THE SPANGLED BANNER

THE news we published this afternoon about Mexico, and our war with that country, has

WAR WITH MEXICO

one feature of peculiar interest. Perhaps the idea is hardly definite enough to elaborate an article upon—but still it *is* warranted that there will soon be a dismemberment of our unhappy southern Republic. Yucatan has long been dissatisfied with the treatment she has received from the “central power,” and, (as stated), now throws off her allegiance, and sets up for herself; giving out that she won’t need a long coaxing to join the United States.

As to a “Republic of the Rio Grande,” such a formation would be but the stepping stone to furnish a cluster of new stars for the Spangled Banner. No small and weak power could (or would wish to,) exist separately in such immediate neighborhood to the United States. We therefore think it every way likely that, unless the present war be summarily drawn to a close, Mexico will be a severed and cut up nation. She deserves this,—or rather her *government* deserves it, because Mexican rule has been more a libel on liberty than liberty itself.—Most of her provinces, instead of rushing to her rescue, as to aid a beloved

WALT WHITMAN

parent, will rather exult at her downfall, as at the rout of a tyrannical oppressor!

July 7, 1846

OUR TERRITORY ON THE PACIFIC

HOWEVER soon the passage-at-arms between this Republic and Mexico, be closed, we hope—since things have resolved themselves into the state they now hold—that the United States will, (in some way,) fix their mark of ownership on the American coast of the Pacific, down a bit below our old boundary. California, or rather Upper California, stretches between the 32d and 42d degrees of latitude on this coast: and here is the proposed field of Colonel Stevenson's expedition. That stretch is irrigated by two great rivers, the Buena-ventara and Timpanogos, between which lie St. Francisco, (on the latter river), and Monterey. Even at this moment, the Star Spangled Banner may be floating from those towns.

We love to indulge in thoughts of the future extent and power of this Republic—because with its increase is the increase of human hap-

WAR WITH MEXICO

piness and liberty.—Therefore hope we that the United States will keep a fast grip on California. What has miserable, inefficient Mexico—with her superstition, her burlesque upon freedom, her actual tyranny by the few over the many—what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the New World with a noble race? Be it ours, to achieve that mission! Be it ours to roll down all of the upstart leaven of old despotism, that comes our way!

October 13, 1846

THE VICTORY

UPON close examination, Taylor's capture of Monterey on the 24th ult. appears to be a greater achievement even than his victories at Palo Alto and La Palma. Storming an army of double his own force—that army posted in the most advantageous manner, with inexhaustible ammunition, and every thing in the world to make them “hold out”—and the inflexible perseverance of his troops day after day until triumph was accomplished—make a fit conclusion to the previous operations of our

WALT WHITMAN

soldiery on the Rio Grande! It is another clinching proof of the indomitable energy of the Anglo-Saxon character; and were it not that so many gallant men have been struck down in the battle, would afford cause for unmarred exultation! But war is a dreadful evil, in any event and under any circumstances—and we hope (and feel confident) that the government of the United States will bow sufficiently to that public opinion which over the whole civilized world is arrayed against war, except on an extreme contingency, as to leave no way untried to stop this contest of ours with Mexico—and allow the United States to pursue its *peaceful* conquests—which are far grander and more blessed and more enduring than any conquests of force.

November 16, 1846

ABETTING THE ENEMY

THE New York *Tribune*, in its erewhile way, is leveling sarcasms at the Army, the Navy, the advance of the American cause, and every successive progress of our brave fellows, at the

WAR WITH MEXICO

south-west! The damper at Alvarado is meat and drink to this anti-American print! It chuckles over it, and launches dirty sneers at our officers and men!

As to opinions about the origin of the war—or opinions about the greater or less wisdom of *our* suing for peace—every man has a right to his own. With the views we hold about moral independence, we should be the last person to find fault with another person for expressing honest notions on those points, whether they coincided with ours or not. But these sneaking innuendoes which the *Tribune* is throwing out day after day—its open advocacy of the Mexican cause—its virulent venom on everything appertaining to the American side—comprise a dastardiness, which outrages all the decency that should be observed by the conductor of that print, as an editor of a print, or an American citizen! The Great Constitution which he impudently appeals to in these very attacks, makes but *one* crime, which it individualises as treason—and in its worst phase that is the very course now pursued by the *Tribune*!

WALT WHITMAN

We, too, abhor war, as much as the editor of the *Tribune*. We bow to the beauty of peace, not in the abstract, merely, but as a rule for practice for nations and individuals—for our beloved Republic, above all other nations. But is that any reason for insulting out native land, and her brave, ill-paid soldiers and sailors? Is that any reason for painting up in the most seductive colors everything appertaining to our foe, and by contrast making gloomy everything that is of and with us? Is it merely to make party capital?

December 5, 1846

THE COMMAND OF THE AMERICAN ARMY IN MEXICO

—ONE of the New York prints states authoritatively that Gen. Scott “is to take supreme command in Mexico.” *If* this is true, public sentiment, which will be outraged by it, will not be slow, we opine (and hope) to express its disapproval. Gen. Taylor has from the very beginning shown the rarest and most needed qualities for the very difficult post of Amer-

WAR WITH MEXICO

ican commander in Mexico; qualities which have left nothing to be asked for more, from him.—He is “one of a thousand.” He has gained the admiration not only of his country, but the world.—And at this crisis in our dispute with our southern neighbor, to allow *any* consideration foreign to the issue, (the historical reader will remember the Gates movement in our Revolutionary contest to supersede Washington), to displace him from the chief command, is a defiance not only of policy, but, as we intimated, of a most righteous public sentiment.

It is probable that such objections as these may be answered by reference to “the rules of the service,” to precedent, or some such way. This was the way of the Dutch princes whom Napoleon always defeated, but who consoled themselves with the reflection that their tactics (theoretically) had been unexceptionable—and that according to all the rules ever laid down in books, they *ought not* to have been defeated. We plain civilians are not soldiers enough to know the war articles. But we know enough to tell who wins the most battles—who is likely to save us from paying the ex-

WALT WHITMAN

penses of a long tedious war through our taxes (for to that complexion must it come at last.) We know that while Gen. Scott has danced attendance at Washington, and moved in slow state from city to city in the north, when he should have served his country in the south—Taylor and his gallant captains and equally gallant men, have achieved the most brilliant deeds recorded in the annals of modern warfare! have sustained the name and rights of their country in a manner to entitle them to a thousand-fold more reward than their paltry pay, and the fleeting mention such as this they now get!

December 16, 1846

[“THE MOST BLOODLESS” WAR EVER KNOWN]

AMID the thoughts called up by the fact that there is a state of war now existing between this Republic and its nearest neighbor, it must not be forgotten that this war is the most bloodless one thus far, (in proportion to the scope, it has had in object and action) that ever was known on earth! Counting all

WAR WITH MEXICO

the battles that have been fought—and all the numerous skirmishes and forays—probably not a thousand lives have been lost. And this is the more strange, when we remember the magnitude of the victories gained—some of which rival the fights of old in Grecian passes, and the proudest examples of Latin valor!—(of course it must be borne in mind that we are forming our calculations of the loss *not* from the exaggerated rumors—such as those which came at the first blush).

Just reflect for a moment on the attitude held at this time by the United States forces in Mexico, toward the people—and the interchange of business and pleasure between the soldiers and the natives. Why, *that* is not war! Many classes in what is called a peaceful community, have and do greater bitterness toward each other, than the Yankee army and the Mexicans—the larger portion of them. . . . We love to record these things, because we love to record all signs of ameliorated humanity. *Will not the future effect of even this war extend the area of Peace Principles—and hasten the advent of that holy era when all swords*

WALT WHITMAN

*shall be beat into plough shares and spears into
pruning-hooks?*

January 4, 1847

THE WAR

SPECULATION on what will probably come to pass in the further action of the Mexican War—what the Governments intend to do, and what Gen. Taylor *ought* to do—are so numerous and common, not to say idle, that the Brooklyn *Eagle* may well be excused from contributing its mite to the general stock; especially as it don't pretend to have the gifts of prophesy or omniscience. One thing, however, quite all will agree upon; and that is a devout wish for the very *earliest possible honorable PEACE*. It needs, at this age of the world, and in this land, no labored argument to prove the long list of monstrous evils that come in the train of War—how every beautiful doctrine, every Democratic reform, on which the ardent hopes of the Philanthropists of this age are fixed, wilt under the influence of War, as a growing tree, through whose verdure sweeps the hottest flame!

WAR WITH MEXICO

We among the rest, have upheld the President and the progress and action of our gallant troops on the Rio Grande, and the justice of the cause of the United States. We do so still. Mexico has just as surely been the aggrieved, for long long years past, toward us, as that God rules in Heaven. And as to all this party balderdash of the Whigs against the Administration, for the most contemptible purposes of demagogueism—taking the sacred mantle of Peace—preaching, to cover their real purposes of selfishness and spite—it needs no answer—the future will set it right. But the time has arrived when all citizens should speak candidly and firmly on this subject of the Mexican War. *Let it go no further!* Enough has been done to revenge our offended honor. The Mexicans have been punished enough. * * * *

February 13, 1847

PEACE WITH MEXICO

WE are as much in favor of peace with Mexico as any one can be—but how on earth are we to get peace, while our adversary obsti-

WALT WHITMAN

nately persists in carrying on the war, and refuses to receive our diplomatic agents? War is a horrible evil: so is anarchy—but as the latter is less horrible than despotism so is war far less in its evils, than quieter, but deeper dangers. The Whig Party—the leaders of it—are acting a dastardly part in connection with the present state of things! They prostitute the sacred name of peace, to help their own miserable petty spite toward the administration—may we not say toward *the country*? Dare any Whig legislator in Congress to take the responsibility of stopping the war, on any easier terms than the President himself offers?

June 21, 1847

LENGTHS OF WHIG PARTIZANSHIP. INFAMOUS CHARGES!

THE dirtiest and silliest imputations are found, now and then, in some of the Whig papers. What, for instance, may be fairly thought of the monstrous charge contained in the following extract from the New York

WAR WITH MEXICO

Tribune, of this morning? That print is speaking of the battle of Buena Vista, and says:

It was a part of the programme of the President and his cabinet that Gen. Taylor should suffer defeat in order to flatter the Mexican pride and induce the nation to peace.

Is it possible that such scoundrelly charges are made by an *American*? Why, they would disgrace even those English libellers, in the London prints, who have lately been inventing and arraying all sorts of falsehoods against us!

. . . But hear the (editorial of the) *Tribune* again—where he says that, in the matter of battles between Mexico and us

The President looked on the contest with a feeling of perfect indifference as to its termination.—Santa Anna, or Gen. Taylor—*Tros Tyriusve*—he did not care which was victorious. “The free and gentle passage at arms” of Buena Vista, he had provided for the combatants: he was not responsible for, nor interested in, the result.

The black mouthed libeller! He who could utter such an imputation against the President of the United States is unworthy the name of American! Just think of it a moment reader: Whig reader, even, if you be so! It

means that Mr. Polk, the man entrusted with the rule and responsibility of these weighty movements, is not only heedless to his great duties, *but that he wishes the Mexicans to defeat our armies and slaughter our fellow citizens, and, if possible cut down the high glory of our arms*—for what? O, that a mean and petty and most vile party object may be attained! Said we too hastily that the man who could utter such charges against the *Commander-in-Chief*, deserves not the name of American? What he *does* deserve, we will not put in our columns; for the words it would require could not fail to go as far beyond the limits of decorum, as the act which invites our remarks is beyond all patriotism, decency, and common truth!

We noticed, too, a day or two since, a deliberate transcript in the leading editorial of the *New York Gazette and Times*—(a miserable abortion of Whig-Nativism—mongrel in every good thing and specific only in its bigotry and meanness)—we noticed the taking bodily of *nearly a chapter from the Sacred Scriptures*, all charged and primed as against the President and Democratic Party! The connection of

WAR WITH MEXICO

the thing was vague at the best; but by the editorial comments, the reader was made to understand that those *extracts from the Bible* evinced how Mr. Polk wanted to kill off Gen. Taylor and his countrymen: pretty much, indeed, in the same spirit as the *Tribune's* charges, before mentioned. This was blasphemous! But what do such creatures care about the means they use to make a little wretched capital? In this instance, however, they are reckoning without their hosts; for the masses of the Whig Party *have American hearts*, and will hardly brook such foul and infamous insults to the nation, through its representatives.

September 23, 1847

WHEN WILL THE WAR BE ENDED?

A question which any one may ask, but which no one can answer. Of this, however, we are sure, that ordering out ten thousand men at a time, won't do it. Let fifty thousand fresh troops be raised and sent forward with all possible despatch, and with those already there something may be done to show

the Mexicans that we are in earnest. This talk about a peace party is all moonshine, until we are able to protect them from their own military tyrants; and secure their property from military seizure, or the plunder of guerrilla robbers. We must make our authority respectable—we must make our possession of the country safe to the people, and give them security in the pursuit of their lawful occupations, and in their trade and traffic with our Army. It is idle to garrison a town with ten or twenty or five hundred men while as many thousand of guerrillas, the finest horsemen riding the finest animals in the land, are sweeping around the place to pounce upon them, and having intercourse with them—whenever a dozen yards from the walls.

We do not know what is the expectation or purpose of the government; but we are persuaded that if the work is well done, it must be quickly done.—Every body knows we can take possession of the country. But this is not the thing. We must hold possession, and so manage that they must stay beat. This cannot be done with 12 or 30,000 men,

WAR WITH MEXICO

in the midst of a population of seven or eight millions. It cannot be done by barely keeping open our lines of communication. We must protect the people, inspire them with confidence in our permanent power—power for the future as well as the present. We must clear the country of robbers and military usurpers; garrison the large towns with large and efficient forces, which shall make all the surrounding regions feel secure. We must make the intercourse and trade of the interior with ports of entry perfectly safe, so that the goods imported may find a market, without the purchasers fearing to be lassoed on their return, for having dealing with the “Yankee heretics and robbers.”—The miserable cry of expenses and running the country in debt is too late now. Every copper saved in this way costs a dollar in the end, and only protracts the war. God knows we have no love for this or any other kind of war; but we know that this temporising, delaying, negotiating, peace-begging policy with an ignorant, prejudiced, and perfectly faithless people, is not the way to end the contest. There is no middle course

—either we must back out of it entirely, or we must drive it through with a vigorous hand.

General Scott may enter the capital, but he will find nothing there, we fancy, but empty houses, deserted cathedrals and churches, and plenty of beggars, thieves and assassins—and all he can do with his present force, is to turn around and march out again. And General Taylor can do the same at San Luis. And what then? Where is the government, the treaty, the peace so long promised? and even if obtained, how long will it last?

Our prophecy from the beginning has been: place 30,000 disciplined troops at Mexico; and as many more on the lines of communication with Vera Cruz and the Rio Grande. Under the protection of these let the peace party (which embraces the best part of the citizens, though they dare not speak as matters stand now,) establish a government, whose efficiency and permanency shall be guaranteed by the United States. This will bring out enterprise, open the way for manufacturers and commerce, into which the immense dead capital of the country will find its way, as soon as

WAR WITH MEXICO

its owners can be assured it will be free from seizure and forced loans. Agriculture will develop the natural resources of the country, really one of the finest in the world, after all; and the increase of products and of trade will react in the increase of enterprise and of an active and business population from abroad. Then at the end of this will come an increase of printing presses, papers, books, education and general intelligence, and lastly, the happiness of the masses, now so sunk in ignorance and superstition.

To accomplish this may require the force above named for years, though it may be gradually lessened as confidence and security are established. To accomplish this will cost millions, but it will abundantly pay. This is the best kind of conquest; and so doing, in the end we shall have a sister Republic, whose alliance will be both an honor and a source of strength.

NOTE.—The above article was written antecedent to the late battle and victories. But the same views are entertained still; and little hope exists in our mind from any “patched up” peace.

December 2, 1847

MR. GALLATIN'S PLAN OF SETTling OUR
DISPUTE WITH MEXICO

THE morning papers are criticising at some length a pamphlet lately written and published by the venerable Albert Gallatin, on the subject of our difficulties with Mexico, and what he thinks the proper way of settling them. According to the aged writer, we United Statesers must give in everything—acknowledge, in amount, that the Neuces is the southern boundary of Texas—recall our troops from Mexico—and, in every material point, act as the vanquished and weaker party instead of the victorious and powerful one. For our own part, we do not hesitate at once to disagree from every position taken by Mr. Gallatin, as regards the proper way of ending the war—and the measures to be taken in regard to the territory, indemnity, and so forth.

The past is the past. As to the origin of the war, and the way it came to *be* a war, and all that, argument and discussion would be both useless and unprofitable. Our troops

WAR WITH MEXICO

have fought hard-contested battles, and *have* gained signal triumphs over vastly superior forces—and paid dearly, too, for some of their triumphs. They *do* occupy the enemy's capital, as rulers there. Large and populous as the nation of Mexico is, it cannot make head-way against them at all. It is for *us*, then, after paying the priceless value of so many noble lives, and of so much bloody toil, to lose the fruits of victory? It is for *us* to yield every thing? We say *no*; there is no need of it, on any consideration.

For our part, and we believe we speak the popular feeling, we believe that very large accessions of fertile territory will be made to our beloved Republic, as a sequence of this war. We have already had all the bad: let us now follow with the good. If we do not, we shall be fools indeed. Not that we join in what seems to us the unreasonable cry of "annexing *the whole* of Mexico"—for we believe that such a superlative doctrine is likely to defeat *all*, because it grasps too much, and may thus get none. But we could hope that from this time forth, the government and the

Democratic Party might take open and avowed ground to this effect: that the yielding us of an ample extent of Mexican north-western territory should be an indispensable condition of peace.

We have lofty views of the scope and destiny of our American Republic. It is for the interest of mankind that its power and territory should be extended—the farther the better. We claim those lands, thus, by a law superior to parchments and dry diplomatic rules. What has Mexico done with them, or for them? Those lands would in due time become independent States, too, like the rest; for we have no vassal provinces, like the monarchies of old Europe. We do not take them to be our inferiors in any respect, but to be our equals. And future generations, thousands and millions of men, appear in the dim light of coming years, to endorse our claim.

THE OREGON BOUNDARY DISPUTE

March 13, 1846

[JOHN BULL'S BLUSTERING ABOUT OREGON]

JOHN BULL is blustering at a great rate about Oregon! The English papers received yesterday contain an unusual amount of ridiculous bravado, directed against this Republic. We had entertained a better idea of the foreign press than to suppose it capable of such coarse and silly language; and though it is some consolation to know that scurrility is not confined to the American newspapers alone, we are sorry to see any thing in the shape of encouragement for the war spirit either in Britain or the United States.

Perhaps the real explanation of all this, is, the overshadowing greatness and strength of the American confederacy—a strength so potent and so much to be confided in, that, even while remaining in sluggish quiet, it *com-*

pels the deference of the haughtiest nation in the world. England is in a fever—augmenting her Army and Navy—fortifying her coast—making peace at home by concessions to her clamorers there—and preparing, as it were, to fight for her very existence, even while she knows well enough that there will be no fight. At least the chances are ten to one against it—and this the American executive must know, or there would be preparations made on our part too. We published a small item yesterday comparing the 171 vessels comprising [comprising] the steam navy of Great Britain to our forlorn little five! And yet this Government is fully a match for Britain, at the greatest strength the latter can bring! The power of a nation by no means lies in its organized peace establishment of army and navy. In one sense, indeed, the more extensively that establishment has been kept up, the weaker that nation; for the stamina of long years is drained and exhausted—while others, of quieter pretensions, have husbanded it till a time of need.

As for the vaunted ocean-sway of Great

THE OREGON BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Britain, we laugh it to scorn! It can never compete with us, either in time of peace or war. Our Yankee ingenuity has built better ships, and manned them with hardier crews than any other nation on earth. The preference in such a respect is to the capacity, reserved force, and latent power of a people. England is strong, but old. America is full of young blood, young impulses, and young ambition.

Thus much for the braggadocio of the London press. But to those (and not a few there are) who send us words of gentler meaning—hopes for peace, and wishes of a closer brotherhood, and less recrimination, we too have gentle responses, and the proffered hand of love! The sentiment for peace in this country is deep, wide and ardent. The large-hearted lovers of their race—those who are not bound in their patriotism by an ocean shore or a geographical line—know full well the horrors of war and the renewal it would create of the jagged prejudices and hates between men who ought to be as brethren.—Heaven forefend a war!

WALT WHITMAN

June 15, 1846

VERY EXCELLENT NEWS

YES; we are free to confess, it *is*, without doubt, VERY excellent news that we get over the Magnetic Telegraph this morning. We are told—and we do not doubt it—that there is every reason for supposing the Oregon Treaty to be *signed* by the high contracting parties, the American executive on the one side and the British Ambassador on the other—and that it is sent in to the Senate *for their* action today or will be tomorrow. Of its fate in that body, of course, after the late tremendous vote in favor of the President acceding to the Treaty, there can be no doubt.

“A flourish trumpets: Strike alarm drums!”
But not *for* battle!

June 19, 1846

“OUR FLAG IS THERE!”

WE have run up our beautiful new flag on the staff at the top of the “*Eagle* building,” today, for that the Constituted Authorities of

THE OREGON BOUNDARY DISPUTE

our country—a noble Democratic President, and many noble Democratic Senators—have ratified a certain treaty, the effect whereof is, no prospective war. We hope our “Fifty-four-Forty” friends will not grumble at this. We, too, would have marched up to that line if we could have gone there. But what is decreed, is decreed.

The American flag! Ah, its broad folds are destined to float, yet,—and we, haply, shall see them—over many a good square mile, which now owns a far different emblem! *Our* flag is “thar,” as a token (for one thing) of the principles of our journal, and all connected with it—which we feel a pride in thinking are of the *True American stamp!* We intend to roll its gay colors to the breeze, on all fit occasions—our patriotic anniversaries—the visit to Brooklyn, of distinguished men, and so forth.

July 24, 1846

A GREAT EVIL AVOIDED

THE contents of the European newspapers brought over by the late steamers, prove that,

WALT WHITMAN

in spite of all prejudice and jealousy, there is a powerful current of good will among the people of the Old World, toward the denizens of the New. And not only good will, but admiration. They rejoice over our progress, feel a pride in our victories, and see grounds of gratulation in our increased territory and means. It is beautiful that this is so! And what a far better development, so, than would have been the result of even the justest war on our part, with Great Britain! When we look back a few months, and see the great gulf we have escaped, we are quite appalled at the prodigious extent of the danger—and more still, at the flippant blustering haste with which a portion of our public men showed their heedlessness of that danger! We bless God that we have shaved past the rocks so safely—though so closely!

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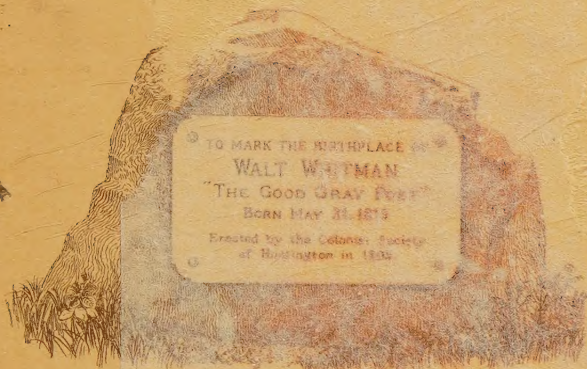
vol. 1

WHITMAN, WALT

THE GATHERING OF THE FORCES.

DATE DUE

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Stone and Tablet Marking the Birthplace of Walt Whitman at West Hills, Long Island

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The gathering of the forces,

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Whitman, Walt,

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